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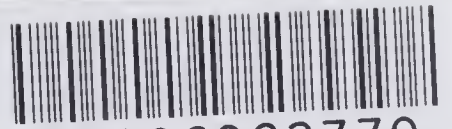
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Allegories and Tales

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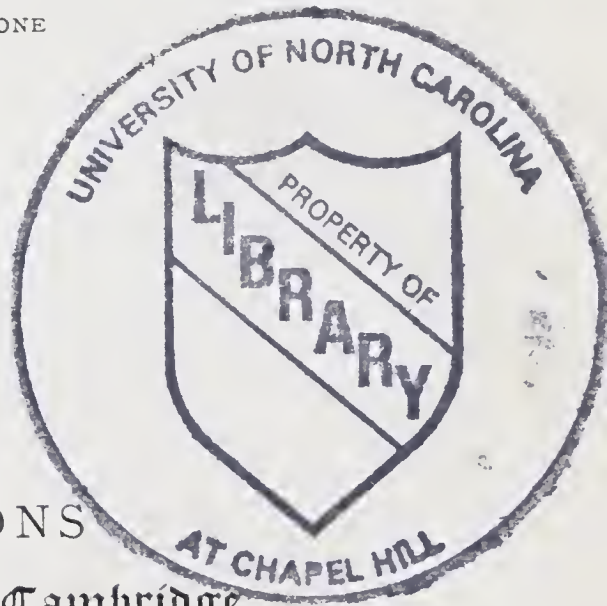
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TALES

BY THE REV.

WILLIAM EDWARD HEYGATE, M.A.

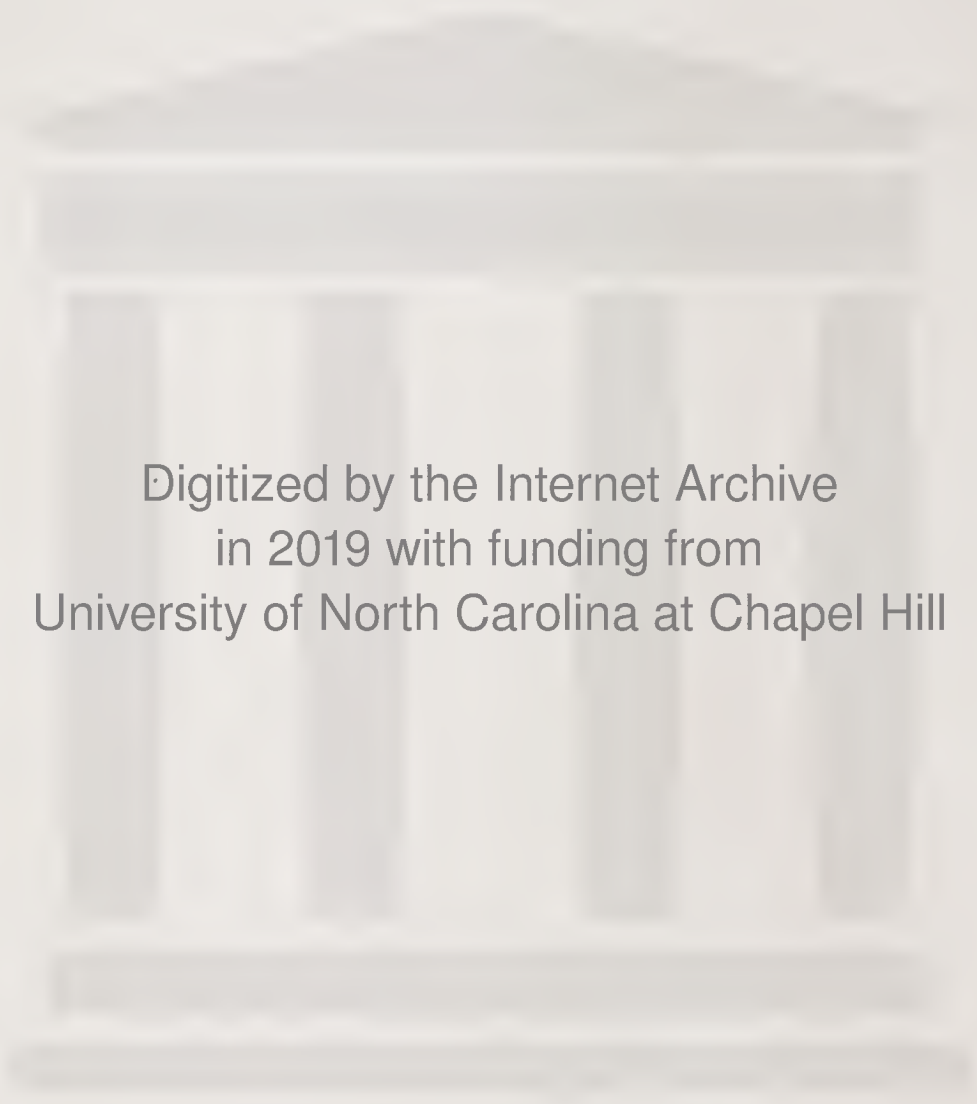
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Ulric.

THERE once dwelt at Buda a boy named Ulric. His parents were noble, and Ulric enjoyed every pleasure that affection and wealth could bestow. He was, moreover, clever and handsome, and he excelled all his companions in sports. He was, therefore, so far spoiled that he was wilful, and too often crossed the wishes of his affectionate parents, but not so far but that he had a warm, generous heart, hated everything wicked and mean, and delighted to please his father and mother, unless he wished to please himself more in some special matter.

That which made him do wrong was impatience of any restraint. He would take less of any lawful indulgence than he need have done, and often denied himself in order to give to the poor. But once tell him not to do anything, and he immediately desired to do it; and this proud impatience made him scorn

wise advice ; so that if a caution was given to him, he very often committed some foolish action, which he would not have done had he not been warned to avoid it.

About the time when Ulric ceased to be a boy, and began to look upon himself as a man, being neither one nor the other, Buda was full of suspicions and fears.

In the course of a year several young men had suddenly disappeared, and no trace of them could be found. Three of these were Ulric's own friends, and he was greatly distressed at their loss ; but he laughed at the explanation which many persons endeavoured to give of the circumstance.

The fact was that the period of this strange disappearance was the same as that of the appearance in Buda of a very remarkable person. This man was a stranger. He was tall, handsome, and rich. He dressed as an Eastern, and was known by the name of Hajjah. But whether he spoke of himself by this name, or it was assigned to him at random by others, none knew. In fact where he lived was unknown, and his occupation as well. He was seen at processions, at the market, on Change, everywhere, including Church. He gave liberally to the poor ; distributed

healing balsams ; and several times had given very wise counsel to persons who inquired of him, and once to the City itself during a great alarm at the approach of an enemy.

People differed very much in the account which they gave of him. Some said that he had a most benevolent expression of countenance, and that he was a saint in disguise ; others said that his eye was like that of a fiend.

It was not to be wondered at, then, that, since the arrival of this strange person and the disappearance of the youths were simultaneous, many people connected the two events, and considered Hajjah, in some way or other, the cause of the calamity which made all Buda tremble.

Report grows as it spreads. If one youth disappeared, it was soon said that ten were missing ; and all sorts of stories were circulated, most of which agreed in declaring that Hajjah and the missing youth had been seen together, and indeed this was the only part of these tales which was true.

The magistrates were appealed to. Hajjah was to have been arrested, but he could not be found ; yet he was seen again here and there, and another youth was soon afterwards missing.

It was only natural, therefore, that Ulric's parents should entreat him to avoid this mysterious person. When they did so, he hesitated, and made them no promise. He seemed to be thinking it over; and then his father, alarmed beyond measure, laid a solemn command on his son to avoid all intercourse with Hajjah. Ulric made no reply, but went out more anxious than ever to see him, and impatient of his father's injunction.

He knew, indeed, that the feeling was wrong, but he had accustomed himself to indulge it; and now he said to himself, "I have reason on my side. I have lost three of my friends. If I could but see this man, I might learn something of them. I would go slyly to work, and who knows whether I may not unravel this mystery? At any rate I will try."

He had not long to wait. When he went out to bathe in the evening, he turned the corner of the street suddenly and came upon Hajjah, who looked at him with a countenance so full of majesty and kindness that all suspicion vanished at once. He stopped, coloured, and tried to speak, but could not. He felt himself in the presence of one infinitely greater in every way than himself, and was awed as well as attracted.

Hajjah, therefore, spoke first.

“You have something to say to me, my son.”

“I— I—” stammered Ulric.

“I can guess,” said Hajjah; “you are too brave, too noble to believe all that the fools say of me; but you are anxious about your friends. You want to know if I can tell you anything of them.”

Ulric started as he perceived that the stranger knew his secret desire.

“I can tell you,” repeated Hajjah. “They are alive. I can shew them to you; and not only that, but I can bestow on you the same happiness which they are enjoying.”

“They ought to come home,” exclaimed Ulric, “and not be enjoying themselves when their friends are weeping, not knowing what has become of them.”

As he said this, Ulric looked at the stranger, and saw a curious expression pass over his face like a flash. He shuddered at the sight; but the change was only momentary, and when Hajjah replied, his eye was as calm and gentle as ever. Ulric thought it must have been a mistake on his part, and he listened attentively.

“Perhaps you are right, Ulric,” answered Hajjah. “But you must not blame your friends without seeing

their inducements to stay where they are. If you will go and see them, you can judge for yourself."

"But shall I return?" asked Ulric, suspiciously.

"If you like."

"Swear to me."

"I swear, you silly boy. One would think that you were going to do me a favour. I fancy it is quite the reverse."

"When shall I go?" asked Ulric.

"At once."

"Can I not go back first, and speak to my father?"

"No; you cannot. You might have done that before."

Ulric winced.

"I did not think you were such a child as to have to ask leave before you went here or there," remarked Hajjah.

"I will go," replied Ulric.

Again he saw that strange expression pass over the features of Hajjah. He hesitated; but mastering the fear, he followed his leader.

"How strange it seems," said Ulric in a few minutes. "I know every field and lane round the city, but I never was here."

"No," said Hajjah, "you never have been here yet ;

but, for all that, the place is close to your home. Now I must leave you for a short time. Keep straight on as far as that turn, and then you will see my dwelling. Go and ring at the gate, and wait in the garden for me."

As he spoke Hajjah turned. Ulric looked after him for a few minutes, and as he did so he saw the tower of his father's house very near. Should he return, and give up his plan? It was still possible. He even took a few steps backwards; but then the thought came across his mind that it would be cowardly and absurd to return when he was so near to the object of his search; and so he went forwards. A few more impatient steps brought him to the gate of a mansion. He paused, hesitated, decided, rang the bell. The gates flew open. He entered the courtyard; and as he did so the heavy doors flew clanging back, and he was a prisoner.

On the right was a path leading into a garden, and over it hung an arch on which was inscribed in bright letters—

ENTER AND BE FREE.

Ulric passed under it, and came to another, on which was written—

CHOOSE YOUR OWN PLEASURE.

Ulric passed on, and entered on a scene of such dazzling beauty that all his fears were forgotten. Flowers and fruits hung on the same tree, glowing with rival colours. Birds sang, lawns streaked with silver streams spread out. Noble youths were wrestling, or shooting, or hurling their darts; and lovely maidens were singing and dancing, attended by those who were weary of sports.

How many hours or days Ulric spent in these pleasures he knew not. He had forgotten his home, and the young friends whom he came out to seek. But he felt a weariness creep over him by degrees; the pleasures palled more and more, till he began to think what he should do next.

But there was no need for him to decide. A voice cried through the gardens, "Pass on. Make way for others," and all began sullenly to move forwards into a more distant part of the grounds. Then Ulric at once saw his lost friends. One was lying by a huge tun of wine almost unconscious. His cheeks were bloated, his eyes red; he looked as if he had spent a long life in drinking. When Ulric drew near, he just recognized him, and held up his goblet, but Ulric passed on.

Next he saw two other friends, quarrelling over a

table on which the dice rattled. Their cheeks were hollow, their eyes sunk, and they glared at each other like tigers. As he drew near they looked up for a moment, and then went on with their play, as if he were a stranger.

Another whom he used to see in the city, lay on a bank, enormously fat, surrounded by half-empty dishes, and listening to a musical box. He nodded indolently to Ulric, and then fell asleep. Further on amidst the trees Ulric caught glimpses of a scene of debauchery from which his eyes shrank as from pollution.

He would go no further. He resolved to escape before he became like the beasts into whose den he was thrust. Before he did so, however, he thought he would try to save his lost friends with himself, and he went to the gamblers to persuade them, and ask their advice, but they would not listen, and his words were drowned in the endless rattle of dice.

Then he went to the drunkard, and with difficulty roused him to attention, but he only replied, "He was satisfied to remain as he was."

"To live and die like the swine?" said his friend.

"Who are you," he replied, "to speak thus to me? I suppose you came here to follow your pleasure, as I

did for mine. You are a fine fellow to talk of sobriety. You keep your sin and let me keep mine." The words went to Ulric's heart like sharp arrows. He could not fire up and repel them with indignation, for he felt they were just. He paused and replied,—

"We have both sinned, but let us do so no longer. Let us arise and escape."

"We cannot, if we would," he wearily answered.

"Why not?"

"You will see, if you try," was the answer, and the poor drunkard wept with hysterical sobs. "I have tried often and could not," he added.

"I will go then by myself," answered Ulric; "I should like to see what will stop me, or catch me when I get away to those fields."

He felt for his dagger as he spoke. It was gone. He remembered that he had cut clusters of grapes with it in the other part of the garden, and left it on the bank at the foot of the vine.

"I will go without it, then," he said angrily, and took a step forwards. The moment he did so, he felt a sharp cutting pain in his legs, and he fell on the grass. He rose and went back to his friend, and felt nothing; but directly he tried again to escape he felt his legs involved in a network of invisible wires,

which cut him almost to the bone, and prevented his progress.

When Ulric found out the cause he was furious, and began to reproach the stranger who had entrapped him. As he did so, he looked up, and saw him standing by watching. The terrible expression of hatred, before seen for an instant, was now the settled meaning of his face. Only on his lips there was a malicious smile of triumph, which froze the hot blood of the youth.

"They are bonds of your own making," said the stranger. "Your bonds first, and now mine. You cannot escape."

Ulric sat down in silence. As he did so, the sound of the Cathedral bell calling to vespers floated over the meadows. He thought of his mother, and of words which he had learned as he stood at her knee while he said his childish prayers at the end of the day: "Father, forgive us our trespasses." O if he could but return and say that again. But what a disgrace it would be! To acknowledge what a fool he had been, and to pledge himself to obey ever after! Could he do that? No.

Hajjah seemed to be reading his thoughts, for he said, "You would look foolish indeed. Go and be a

baby again, and live at home all your life. What will the good people of Buda say when they see you, so quiet and so good and so meek, following your parents about like a dog?"

Ulric listened in silence. There was a great conflict within him. Pride and anger and shame on the one side; and misery and fear and love of his injured parents on the other. These wrestled one with another; and darkness came on, and Ulric sat still there, half sullen, half desperate. Once or twice he jumped up and rushed forward, but each time he fell on the ground, cut to the quick, and heard a hollow mocking laughter ring through the trees. So the night deepened and broke, and grey dawn came again, and the Cathedral bell sounded once more for the service, and the captives woke up and jeered him, calling on him to play and to drink; and he found a plate of food near him, placed there, no doubt, by Hajjah, but he threw it away, and lay silent. But when the evening bell tolled again he rose up, and cried through the gardens, "I have sinned! I have sinned! I will do anything, and bear anything, to be able to go and say I have sinned to my father!" Then he sat down and wept as if his heart were rivers of water; and presently his friend began to weep too,

and drew near him, leaving the wine. Then the evening bell sounded again, and they wept on together, until Ulric said, "Shall we try and join in their prayers?" and they did so, weeping still as they prayed; and night fell on them again as they wept.

Again, the sun made the sky glow in the West, and presently rose up in the East, and the prisoners saw the network which bound them shining in the light, like strings of rubies and diamonds, for the wires were wet with their blood and their tears. Then they touched them, and the wires felt softer, and seemed to give way, when pressed. So they rose up together, and found they could walk very slowly; and often they fell, but they went on arm-in-arm, and one held up the other, and after some hours they reached the end of the garden, and entered the long meadows which lay on the side of the river. They washed themselves in the stream, and proceeded till they came to the suburbs. All the men that they met stared at them, and the boys hooted; so foul and bloodstained and torn were their garments; but they went on, looking still on the ground, till they came unto the heart of the city. There they embraced and separated for a time; and Ulric went home and laid his head on the ground at the feet of his father, and

poured out his shame and repentance, and promised humble submission for ever, and his father wept over him and spoke no word of reproach, but lifted him up and embraced him ; and thenceforward it was Ulric's delight and occupation to obey his parents in all things, better pleased to be told what they wished than to originate any good office himself, because it was more the way of humility and of submission. The wounds which the sharp wires made when Ulric tried to escape pained him as long as he lived, but he bore the suffering patiently. Indeed he almost loved it, for it reminded him of the danger from which he was saved, and helped him to walk more humbly and carefully than he did in the days when he liked to have his own way.

As for Hajjah, he was never seized, because he is so crafty ; but he still hangs about Buda and entraps the unwary ; and either he or his agents are about on their work, not only at Buda, but all through the world. It is prophesied that his end is to come, but the prophecy is not yet fulfilled.

The Grand Sight.

MRS. WILSON had two daughters, Mary and Jane, who were old enough to wish to see and hear everything that was going on in the world, and had begun to think of their dress, and of what others did and wore, and to imagine what was said of them and thought of them. Their mother, a sensible woman, did not well know what to do. She was afraid to indulge their vanity, and afraid to be too strict, when an event happened which put the whole place in confusion. An announcement appeared in the papers and on the walls.

On Tuesday next and for two following days Monsieur and Madame Le Monde will exhibit. Tickets, &c. Exhibit what? That was the question. Separately or together? That was another question.

Well, it was agreed that the girls should go, and if it was a separate exhibition that they should see

Madame's first, and the other second, if the first were good ; in which case they should write to their cousin Geoffrey to join them.

So they went. Madame La Monde stood in the midst of the room radiant with jewels and silks of the latest fashion ; and a gay young page pulled the strings ; so that a long procession passed in order before the eyes of the visitors. There were ladies in ruffs like a peacock's tail, their waists laced in like the middle of a wasp, and their gowns spreading out like a parasol ; then another set came, thin as laths, like dressing-gowns hung on a stick ; then a band of hooped creatures, who could not go through the door without making their hoops perpendicular. They looked like an hour-glass at the middle and ends. Then came a set of broken-backed ladies. Surely they were made to be pitied. Some heavy burden had been laid on them, which they could not shake off ; they could only carry it as French women do their loads in the fields by stooping. Then as for hair, some went up to the ceiling in a tower ; some coiled their corkscrews down their cheeks ; some set two studding sails, one on each side ; others hung two ropes, or a sort of rough woollen mat half-way down their backs. And as for bonnets, they varied from

the form of a coal-scuttle to that of a pat of dough or mud dropped by chance on the top of the head.

After these had been exhibited, the scene suddenly changed. There was a crowd of carriages outside a door in a street, and limping ladies entered one after another. Another crowd of carriages haunted the door of a great physician, and thin-waisted ladies were admitted one after another.

"Behold my power," exclaimed Madame le Monde, "I speak and all obey, my servants live for me, suffer for me, die for me. They bear shame and pain cheerfully, and only praise me the more."

"Put them through their movements, Carlo," she continued, and the girls saw the same persons go into a room. The curtain was drawn. In a few moments they came out, of a different shape, and a different colour.

"Are they really women?" asked Jane, very timidly.

"Women," cried Madame. "No ! ladies, or rather blocks—figures. You have seen the figures in shop windows ; these are my blocks. I dress them as I choose, and place them as I choose ; they are mine ; I rule the world ; I am Madame le Monde. Good

morning, my blocks—pardon—I mean my friends and supporters.”

Saying this, Madame passed from the scene, and her husband came in.

He exhibited his blocks in like manner.

There were men with their doublets stuffed as big as a bed, and their thighs as large as the bolster. There were others with coats down to their heels, and waistcoats down to their knees. There were men with trowsers like an old-fashioned gun-case, and coats like the tail of a water-wagtail.

Some had long flowing hair, some black wigs, some were cropped like a prize-fighter. Some wore hats like a mushroom, some like an ant-hill, and some like a pudding-basin.

Some had boots, the tops of which turned up like horns of the moon, and were fastened by a chain to their knees. Others had shoes a foot square at the toes.

Some men were all waist. Some had none.

“Behold,” exclaimed Monsieur le Monde, “my obedient subjects. There lie fifty men slain in duels, for me. There lie fifty men drunk, for I told them it was proper to drink. There is a man who died of consumption because he dared not unfold his beautiful umbrella. There are men who talk poetry, and there

are men who talk science, and there are men who talk blasphemy, and there are men who talk folly, and there are men who lisp, and those only talk French, or else German, and all for me. They get up when I like ; they go to bed when I like ; they spend what I like ; they dine when I like, and eat what I like, not what they like. Behold my supremacy. I am Monsieur le Monde, and the whole world is mine."

"Mamma," said Mary, as they went home, "I shall give up dressing as other people like, and dress as I like."

"Mamma," said Jane, "I shall try and dress differently from them all."

"That would puzzle you, dear," replied the mother to Jane ; "for people have tried every sort of dress to be thought of. I don't think you could find another kind if you tried all your life ; and if you did, you would only be singular, and perhaps set a new fashion. So would you too, dear Mary ; it is never a safe rule to do just what we like. To do what we ought is another thing ; but to do what we like, is quite as bad a rule, if not worse, than to copy the world."

"What had we better do, then, mamma ?" they both asked, in one breath.

“I think the best rule, dearest,” she answered, “is this: to be a little behind the fashion, as far as dress is concerned, and a little short of it too. This prevents us from being peculiar, and saves us from trying to be like others. The less we think of our dress the better. It will not be long before we have a very simple dress, all of us, just a white sheet wound round us—in our coffins. When I get home, I will read you something out of a good book.”

On their return home the book was got out, and the words ran thus:—it was a comment on this passage, “Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

“A tender conscience, and a heart purified from vanity and weaned from the world, will be sure to regulate this, and all other things of this nature, after the safest manner. It will be wary, I. of lightness and fantastic garb, II. of excessive costliness. The Church is all-glorious, but it is ‘within.’ And the embroidery, the variety of graces, the lively colours of other graces shine best on the dark ground of humility.

This is with God of great price. Though it be not the country fashion, yet it is the fashion at court, yea it is the King's own fashion : 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.' " — (Abp. Leighton on 1 Peter iii.)

Selim.

SOME centuries since there resided at Constantinople one man, rich and powerful above all his brethren, the Armenian merchants. He had been carried off as a boy, and sold for a slave ; he had won the regard of his master and obtained freedom ; and then with extraordinary industry and ability had pursued a mercantile life, until the port was full of his galleys, and the bazaar of his goods.

He had a magnificent villa on the Golden Horn, and gardens dipping into the water. There he gave sumptuous banquets, and was deservedly popular ; for he was liberal to the poor, and lavish to his guests ; nor could he have had an enemy in the world, had mankind been free from envy, which it never has been since the fall. Although Selim was so liberal and generous, he still grew richer and richer.

He did not feel the loss of what he gave. It cost him nothing in fact, and was never a sacrifice. In short, giving was only a pleasure to one who did not miss what he gave. Self-satisfaction made more than amends for the outlay.

One evening after all the guests were departed, and whilst the gold and silver vessels were still spread around containing the richest fruits which money could furnish, a slave announced to Selim that a stranger desired an audience. Selim replied hastily that he did not see persons on business so late; that if the man desired food, or money to obtain entertainment in the city, he could have it, and he tossed a gold piece to the slave, who bowed and retired. In a few minutes, however, the slave came back with the gold in his hands, saying that the stranger would not take money; and insisted on seeing his master on business of the greatest importance.

Upon this Selim yielded the point, but not with good humour, and in a few minutes a traveller was shown in; and the slave at a signal from his master retired. The stranger stood looking at Selim and then at the magnificent room, and said nothing.

Selim at first took this for a compliment to his state and importance, but he soon grew impatient and

asked somewhat haughtily what the stranger required at such a late hour.

"Thee, my dear brother," was the answer. "I am John, thine eldest and only surviving brother. It is now forty years since the robbers carried thee from Armenia; and only lately have I found thine abode, just in time."

Selim rose and embraced his brother with joy, and made him sit down by himself; and the two wept together over the scene of slaughter, still fresh in remembrance, which made both brothers orphans, and Selim a slave.

"You have been better to me, John, than I was to you," said Selim, after a pause. "I ought to have inquired and ascertained whether any of my dear relations are living to whom I could be of service. Tell me now if there are, it will be a real pleasure to me to help them."

"Spoken like my own brother," answered John; "thou art still a Christian. You have not renounced our holy faith? God forbid the very thought."

"Never," replied Selim, "it is dearer to me than life."

"Thanks be to God," answered his brother, crossing himself.

“And now tell me,” said Selim, “what there is that I can do : you have only to speak.”

“I want nothing for myself,” replied John, “but for others I want a great deal, more than I could venture to ask, if I did not see you still as my own warm-hearted brother, and a disciple of the Crucified.”

“What is it ?” asked Selim, in a tone which had somewhat of uneasiness in it.

“Simply this,” said his brother, “some of our people have offended the Pacha, and he has given them notice that unless they pay down an immense sum in two months, he will burn down all their villages, and sell the whole population into slavery. Such is his will.”

“What is the sum demanded ?” inquired Selim.

John whispered the answer.

“Impossible,” exclaimed his brother, “why, it is the ransom of a province. John, you must be mad to think I could do it.”

“I know it is an enormous sum,” replied John, sadly, “enormous. But it is reported that you have twice as much ; and I know not who else will help if you do not. You are our sole hope.”

“I may be worth that and more,” said the merchant, “but I could only do what you ask by selling this house and all my slaves and horses, or else my

galleys and merchandise. If I did the last I could never recover my wealth. John, it is simply impossible."

"Think what is at stake," replied John, "and think how good God has been to you. Suppose you gave up these things for a time, and then recovered them gradually."

"I cannot," said Selim, "I cannot do without my house and garden and slaves. They are necessary to my position. I could not hold up my head without them amongst the merchants."

"Well, the horses and the gold vessels."

"No, I cannot. I cannot spare them."

"You did without them once," replied John.

"I know I did, but I cannot now spare them. You are no judge, having never been in my place. I have grown into them. I should be wretched without them. I could not live without them, in short."

"But your home?" pleaded John. "Your friends? Your own flesh and blood? Cannot you spare these things better than they can spare home and freedom?"

Now, anger is often the refuge of one who is pushed into a corner by conscience. Selim could not answer John's arguments, but he could and did reply so as to get rid of the subject.

“I tell you,” he said, “that I cannot and will not. If you had toiled as I have all these years, and at last settled down in your old age on a competency, you would know what it is that you ask.”

John rose up to depart.

“Stay!” exclaimed his brother. “Do not leave me in anger. I will give you gold to-morrow. I will give you a thousand bezants. Only stay with me.”

“I cannot,” replied John. “I do not leave you in anger, God forbid; only in sorrow. But I must go. I must find some one to help, if I go to the Sultan himself.”

Selim was vexed with his brother, and vexed with himself; and when John had left him he sat down gloomily, and all his wealth and all the hopes he had in the projects afoot gave him no pleasure.

Next day John came again to bid him farewell. “I am returning,” he said, “and shall never see you again. Farewell, dearest brother, and may our Lord and Master bless you, and give you His grace.”

There was no reproach in these words, yet they were offensive to Selim; and he answered hastily,—

“And what of your fine errand, John? Have you given it up? I told you, you must do so.”

“No,” said John, sadly, “I have succeeded, but not through you,” and he sighed.

“Succeeded?” exclaimed Selim. “Obtained the money? Impossible! How?”

“The Patriarch has pledged all the holy vessels, and the money will be forwarded to the Pacha in time to save our relations.”

Selim hung his head. He could not meet the eye of his brother; and with a few kind words the brothers parted for ever.

That night Selim dreamed. He saw a man followed by some poor-looking persons, walk along a dusty road and go into a cottage. Then he awoke, and dreamed again. He saw the same person carrying something heavy, it did not appear what, and a crowd round him, shouting. The stranger seemed as if he could carry the burden no further. He went up to him in his dream, and looked at him, and this person turned towards him, and he saw it was the Christ, and heard a soft voice, “I gave up Heaven for thee. I am going to give up my life. This I do for thee, but thou?”—So he awoke. He could sleep no longer. He rose and paced his room. He had sinned a great sin. He was thoroughly alarmed and ashamed. He

would undo the evil. How could he? The time had passed. No. It had not. He could redeem the holy vessels. That would remedy all. So he walked up and down, and as the sun rose he saw his beautiful garden, and the marble fountains and the slaves ; and his purpose began to give way.

“ I do not see why I should do all,” he said to himself.

“ I will do a great deal. I will give nobly, lavishly, but to part with all these is more than is reasonable. It cannot be expected. I require them.”

And then, as people who tell a lie sometimes repeat it until they believe it, he said the very same words again which he had used to his brother.

“ I cannot do without them. I have grown into them. They are necessary to me.”

So he sent 1000 bezants to the Patriarch towards redeeming the vessels, and went to the bazaar and transacted his business as usual.

Everything prospered. Selim grew richer and richer, and sent 1000 bezants more to the Patriarch. His conscience was neither at ease, nor yet uneasy enough to produce any change. If it spoke, he silenced it with some act of charity, which cost him no sacrifice. One day, when surrounded by guests,

the slaves came rushing into the courtyard, followed by the officers of justice. There was no time nor opportunity for explanation. Selim was arrested and carried away. Next day he was brought before the judge, accused by two Greeks of having bought and sold pearls which came out of the harem of the Sultan, and condemned. His property was confiscated, and he was turned out into the streets of Constantinople a beggar.

As he walked on, trying to hide himself from the crowd, he heard all the bitter sayings which spite can invent. The accumulated envy of years was now turned into triumphant malice.

"There goes the Infidel. There goes the slave. Where are his slaves now, and his gardens and horses? He did without them once, he must learn to do without them again."

Selim had borne a good deal, but these words went to his heart like a sword. They were his just condemnation, his sentence from Heaven. He tottered and fell fainting at the door of a house.

When the ruined merchant recovered his senses, he found that he was in the house of a Christian. He lived there in great quietness. His host was very kind, and avoided every subject which could possibly pain

him ; but he did not know Selim's real sorrow, and one evening, in order to comfort him, he told the Gospel history of the young man who only wanted but one thing to be saved, and that one he had not, namely, the grace to give up his possessions. The poor man thought this would be a comfort to Selim, as it showed the great danger of riches, and he was astonished at the burst of sorrow which his words had occasioned.

Selim stayed some months in the house, and worked quietly for his host, and repaid his hospitality by doing everything in his power. The people in the house were amazed at his gentleness and patience, and at the readiness with which he set about and performed the most menial offices. At the end of this time inquiry was made after Selim, and he was discovered. He was taken before the judge, and cleared of the false charge on which he had been so hastily sentenced, and his goods were restored.

The Patriarch had been at work silently for him, had sifted the evidence carefully, and when convinced that it was false, had induced all the Armenian merchants to combine in an appeal to the Sultan for a re-hearing of the case.

Selim therefore received back all he had lost, but it was no longer the same to him, for he was altered

towards it. He first paid off all the debt on the holy vessels, then converted his property into money and jewels, and with a few attendants set off to his native land, hoping to see his brother again, and to enrich all his relatives ; but death cut short his journey, his servants made off with the treasure, and John was never able to discover where his brother was buried. He heard, however, of Selim's repentance, and in a few years joined his brother, twice brother now, to part from him no more.

Two Nights and Days.

I LOOKED and could see nothing. I heard rather than saw. There was a confused sound on the earth of multitudes walking one way, but not together. Sometimes there was a crash and shout as of a battle, cries of the victors, groans of the dying. Sometimes there was a dead silence, broken in some places by moans of suffering, and in others by music and singing rather of levity than of joy. Here, there was a thick darkness, close packed, unbroken. There, was a faint light, and one or two men seemed illuminated with a pale and weak light, and others followed them less enlightened, the light growing more and more feeble at the end of the little band of followers. In another part, some kindled fires, which died out quickly, and they lay down in sorrow round their dying fires. In one part only was there a band of men who seemed to avoid and be avoided. They followed a kind of

ark, and strange flashes of light came from it; and at times fire descended from Heaven on this man and that, and communicated somewhat of its brightness to others. Thus the crowd trod on together through the night, all tending one way, though many knew not whither, and nearly all advanced unwillingly and with a heaviness of heart.

As I looked, a bright star hung over a single spot. It vanished, but from that spot light burst forth and spread. The sun seemed to rise from the very earth, and shot out marvellous beams of glory; but clouds hung round it all the while. It never seemed to have its full strength, but to be veiled and hidden by mists of earth. Moreover, it only shone on one spot in all the world. Presently a thick darkness overshadowed all, and a mighty cry was heard as of one dying, whose voice was all-powerful; and the earth shook, and the rocks rent, and all was still; except that tramp, tramp, went on multitude upon multitude, all walking one way in the darkness.

Then upon that night arose a moon, new, slender, but growing constantly; and it cast a pale sober light upon the earth and revealed a great struggle. Those outside the line of light which it cast upon the earth seemed to rush in and try to crush all those who

walked in the light, but they could not. The moon grew fuller and fuller, its light broader, the people on whom it shone more numerous. It was moonlight, but as bright as any ordinary day, and I could see what those did who were in the fulness of its light, and also those outside it.

Those outside seemed to proceed as they had done before the light of the first day, and before the moon arose. Those inside were at first most regular in their ranks and in their calm advance Eastwards, but, as they grew more numerous, they were broken up and diverse. Some were revelling, some fighting, some digging. Some seemed to be doing what they were ashamed of, for they avoided the light as well as they could. Some seemed to despise the light of the moon, and to be trying to get light out of stones and trees. Others, however, were like angels, and you could hardly distinguish them from the angels who kept coming and going up and down to and from heaven ; and when they came out from the wayside chapels which fringed the roadside, their faces shone with a glory not of this world. Some of these tended the sick. Some guided little children. All went forwards. They did not seem to see anything on their way which made them wish to stay, or which slackened

the speed of their journey, but on and on they went, still looking towards the East.

Presently clouds came across the moon, and furious gales burst upon the earth, the sea roared, and the illuminated pilgrims were mixed up with dark forms, which hustled them, and these dark beings drew together and became a large body inside the other, and were joined by those outside ; and they appeared to attack the enlightened ones, and to prevail over them and to scatter them ; and ever and anon a star fell from heaven, the moon grew more obscure, and the earth shook again.

Then when things had grown worse and worse, and it seemed that darkness and the dark ones would utterly prevail, a pale light became visible in the East, which grew more and more bright, and the sky was irradiated with all the colours of the rainbow ; and the poor oppressed looked up, and watched, and seemed to gather courage. And still brighter grew the light until it was dazzling to behold ; and a fiery cross appeared in the centre, brighter than all that brightness ; and a sound echoed through space like the sound of a trumpet, and a mighty voice cried, and a multitude of glorious creatures seemed to oscillate around the cross, and to radiate its light with their

wings. And the dead arose out of sea and earth ; and there was a great passing to and fro of angels, and a separating of dark ones from light ones, and an examination, and wondrous words were said, some of which I heard, and some I heard not ; and all was awful beyond all power of speech. Then I looked to the centre and I saw One with strange marks on His forehead, and in His hands, Whom all worshipped. And the earth passed away in flame, and crackling, from under my feet, and I knew not where I was, or what I was, only that everything was beautiful ; and there were no clouds, nor moon, nor sun, but a Personal Light, which shone on all, and in all, and through all ; and the light came from Him whom I have mentioned ; and all creation seemed coming and going in happiness, some praising, some working, all serving, And there was a glory into which I could not look, and there were Three in One, whom I could not see, and of whom I dare not speak ; and there was a voice as of all the birds, and all the choirs, and all the rivers that ever were, in a threefold oneness, singing, " Holy holy, holy ! For ever, ever, ever ! " and I can tell no more. But I warn you that these things are true and entreat you to look for them, and be ready for them when they come.

The Moss.

THERE is a moss in the North upon which many lives were lost of old time. Some of the most dangerous places in it looked as safe or safer than others ; and only the most experienced men, and they travelling by daylight, could cross it with safety.

At last there was a meeting of the inhabitants of the district, and it was resolved to put marks along the safe track for the guidance of passengers ; and at the most critical places a notice was stuck up—"Dangerous !" "Impassable," and one or two inscriptions were, "Certain destruction this way !"

So years passed on, and the loss of life on the moss was so rare, that the warning-posts were neglected, and began to go to decay.

At last, a cockney who had made a great fortune, bought an estate in the neighbourhood, and he went in for change everywhere ; and all old institutions

appeared to him so many relics of barbarous ignorance.

Accordingly, at a meeting, he one day brought up this subject, saying—

“I propose that all the old posts on the moss be taken up, and the country left as it was in old time, for :—First. It is an insult to us to suppose that we have not sense enough to choose the right way. Secondly. It is an infringement on liberty. The moss is common property, and a man may go where he likes on it. You have no right to warn him off, as if he were a thief. Thirdly. What right have we to set up ourselves as wiser than others, and to say there is only one right road, and only one safe road? It is like the use of creeds, which are the most conceited and uncharitable things in the world.”

Some of the people at the meeting applauded, some laughed, and then there was a silence. At last, a very old man rose, and replied :—

“It is quite open to Mr. ——, and to anyone else, to go on the dangerous parts of the moss and be lost, if he chooses. I do not see how we insult his understanding by saying where these places are. We only give him the benefit of our experience. He has had none, and I hope never will have ; for to experience the

danger is too often to perish by it. As for our saying there is only one right way, it may look very conceited, but if there is only one right way, it is better to look conceited than be careless of one's neighbour's life. We did not make the moss. As a fact, it is full of places, into which, if a man comes, he is lost. Surely it is a kindness to tell him so. As for the creeds, when our friend has shown himself right about the moss, we will listen about them also ; till then, let us wait, keep up the posts, and make the inscriptions plain, lest our children call us something worse than fools for exposing them to perils of which we were aware, and they were not."

So the posts still stand, and it is to be hoped will continue so long as the moss is a moss.

The Keys.

FOUR orphan lads, who had been fairly brought up, and were suddenly left penniless by the death of their father, were wandering slowly and sadly by the edge of a wood on the banks of the Thames. As they did so, one of them caught sight of an old man, stealing slyly away into the wood. He pointed him out to his brothers, and they followed gently until they saw the old man go down into a hollow, pass through some bushes, and enter a cave. Still the boys followed unperceived; but, just as the stranger put the key into a solid old door, one of them trod on a stick, which cracked, and betrayed him. The old man turned, saw the four lads, and seemed to hesitate for a minute what to do. However, he soon made up his mind, and asked them whether they would like to go in with him or not.

They were hardly prepared for this, and looked at each other uneasily.

“Well,” said the old man, “then you can go home if you like. I thought you wanted assistance, and I am willing to start you in life, if you choose ; if not, you may go ; but return here no more, or it will be the worse for you.”

Richard, the second brother, a bold fellow, cried at once, “Let us in, sir ; we are all ready ; we do want help very much, and should be obliged to you to give it to us, if you will.”

When they had entered the cave, the old man shut the outer door, took a key from his pocket, and having lighted a lamp, opened an inner door which led into a chamber, the floor of which was piled with heaps of gold. The lads were breathless with surprise at the sight ; and whilst they gazed in amazement, the stranger watched their faces in silence.

At last he said, “Take what you like, each of you. It is to start you in life. If you fail, come again. I will give each of you a key to the outer door, and I will hang the other up here ; but mind, you are not to come for twenty years. Then you may ; in fact, you must. You must all come then. I will meet you, and you shall give me an account of yourselves ;

meanwhile I will prepare a cabinet for each, and put your names on it, and you shall have the contents when you come."

So saying, he gave to John, the eldest, one key, to Richard another, to William a third, to James the fourth; and then saw them safely out of the wood.

John, who had helped himself freely, set up as a wine merchant, and, having bought a business, at once began to turn it to account. He mixed weak wines with treacle and colouring stuff, and sold old brown sherry; made port of elderberries, logwood, sloes, and other materials, and advertised largely, but his drugs were not palatable. Then he took an inn on the cliff by the sea. There he made a large malting vat, three inches broader at the bottom than at the top, to cheat the excise; and also an underground passage to a cave where brandy was landed and carried straight up to his cellars. This brandy, or rather raw spirit, he watered and coloured, and sold as the best cognac; but he was foolish enough not to pay the wages of a servant whom he dismissed, and to refuse a glass of grog to one of the smugglers who strolled into the tap; and revenge brought down the exciseman on the one hand, and

the coastguard on the other, and he was exchequered and ruined.

After this, he appeared as a small tradesman in the Borough ; there he sold adulterated groceries, and might have done so till now, only he used short weights, and was convicted, and lost his custom.

Then he went about with a petition, stating that he was a broken-down merchant, and was had up by the Charity Organization Society, and convicted and imprisoned.

When he came out, he went to Richard, and found that he was in no position to help him. He tried William, who flatly refused. He next went to James, who wept when he saw him, and gave him enough to begin life again ; but he had not the will to do this, but spent it, and, being ashamed to go to his brother again, he went to the wood, and reasoning himself out of his fears, put the key—the only thing he had kept—in the lock ; but, no sooner had he done so, than he was seized and put on board a ship, which carried him past the shore and over the seas, and he was never heard of again.

Richard's career was different. He was by nature a speculator. He started one wild scheme after another, in mines, railways, and docks ; and not only this, but

he formed a company for making bank-notes of cobwebs ; another for burning egg-shells into lime ; another for cutting people's hair by machinery ; and this went on until one man lost his scalp, and another, rather tall, half his head down to the nose ; and a third lost his head altogether. Besides this, he had a plan for making soda-water, by inserting large funnels into a river, during a high S.W. wind. It was supposed to have been suggested to him by the great South Sea Bubble. However, fish and cigar ends, and other rubbish got into the bottles, and they lost their reputation. Then he invented the potting of toads, anchovy sauce made of cockchafers, hedgehog skins on the chest as a cure for consumption, guava jelly made out of jelly fish, oyster sauce out of cod's eyes, and a plan for procuring brass from the metropolitan boroughs. There was also a scheme for curing headaches by hydraulic pressure, which drove the pain down and out through the feet ; but he did not foresee that a bad headache would carry away the toes of the boots, whilst escaping.

One scheme failed after another, until all the money was gone. But, meanwhile, Richard lived well, was liberal, hospitable, and popular, except at the time of a failure. He knew the way at last through the

Insolvent Court so well, that he could go in the dark.

When he was in trouble, Richard applied once to William, but received such a rebuff, that he never attempted to see him again. He was more fortunate with James, but only once, for James saw that all he advanced was thrown into the sea.

Beaten out of his profession of company-manufacturer, poor Richard wrote pamphlets, and advocated one side or another of the great questions of the day, in inferior newspapers.

Some of his literary schemes attracted attention. For instance, he wrote an able pamphlet in favour of all cabinet ministers being educated on the blind system, so as to have their facts at their finger ends. And another, "A Plea for all M.P.'s who address their Constituents during the Recess, being excused from Attendance at the House for the Session."

He also advocated the rights of women, and put out a pamphlet with a somewhat Irish title: "Why should not the Navy be Manned by Women?" In support of this plan he adduced the following arguments:—That all ships are female; that all have gunners' daughters aboard, who are found very useful; that women are particularly clever in managing

signals ; that their knowledge of the needle makes them invaluable at the sails and the compass ; that a ship would never miss stays if thus manned ; that chignons would supply caulking, and act as fenders when a boat came alongside ; and, finally, as old women are often chosen to command, a portion of young ones would be good for the service ; and, lastly, that the boats would never want thwarts.

Richard wrote also in favour of widening the Thames, and making it shallower ; urging that what is deep is often contracted, and that a very broad and shallow stream is eminently suited for a *national* mercantile navy.

Richard also had his plans of Church reform. They were briefly these :—That all bishops should sit in the law courts ; all clergymen should farm their parishes, and the farmers manage the churches ; all ministers should hold a simultaneous service in parish churches, each doing a bit, and the people answering at the end either “Amen,” or “I object,” as they wish ; that the act for the abolition of slavery be repealed, in order to enable cures of souls to be more legally marketable ; that all pews shall have lids put to them ; and that all persons may be buried (here again comes in Richard’s Hibernian tendency) horizontally,

or perpendicularly, or slanting, on an application by the deceased to a magistrate, and an issue of order thereon ; and, lastly, that no one be held to be a *bona fide* member of the Church of England, unless he belonged to one of a hundred specified sects.

Only one more publication shall be here mentioned. It was founded on the Darwinian theory, and maintained that a law should be passed at once to prevent improper selection in marriage, and that board schools be established through Africa for educating monkeys into men, efts into alligators, and fleas into lions, all animals contributing alike to the support of the schools. But all these fine schemes failed to bring any money to poor Richard's pockets. He and they were one failure.

As for William, his history is short. He took to money-lending, ground down his debtors, and became richer and richer, without adding a mite to his happiness.

James, the youngest, pursued a regular course of life as a merchant. He had his losses, but not heavy ones ; for he was not a speculator. He, too, grew rich, although he lent to the deserving, and gave away without too careful inquiry into merit.

At last the great day of meeting arrived. On the

twentieth anniversary three brothers met, and looked around for the eldest, but to no purpose.

They entered the cave, but the owner was not there to meet them, as they had expected. But there stood four cabinets, with the names of the brothers inscribed on them. Alas ! there was no one to open the first.

Richard opened his own, and he found in it a pile of certificates of shares in companies which he had originated, and a list of the persons whom he had thoughtlessly, but unintentionally, brought to poverty, with this scroll appended—

“If you wish to try again take more gold.”

But Richard hid his face in his hands, and wept silently.

Then William opened his cabinet. It contained a list of ruined men, whom he had led on to extravagance by loans, and impoverished by interest ; of those who had proceeded to crime, and to suicide ; and of the applications for help which he had rejected. To this was also appended a scroll—

“You have enough, but, if you wish for more, remain behind when your brothers leave, and take what you will.”

Then James opened his cabinet. There was only a scroll in it—

“Return, go on, and be thankful.”

James put down on the ground a bag containing the sum which he had received that day twenty years, with a letter of thanks, took Richard's arm, and departed.

William stayed behind ; and when his brothers were gone, he went into the inner chamber, which was heaped up with gold. He bent forwards to help himself, and to fill two huge sacks which he had brought with him, without thinking how he should ever carry them back, when filled with the precious metal he coveted ; but, as he bent down, he felt the full concentrated attraction of the gold in a mass, which had exercised such power over him hitherto in small portions. He literally clave to the gold. He could not arise, and died there, starving in the possession, or rather possessed by, his treasures.

James offered a home to the penitent Richard, who lived many years happily with him, and although he did not quite lose his sanguine temperament, he never more entered into what is called speculation, but was content to try and make silk purses of sows'

ears ; and often got snubbed for his pains by a dignitary, a cabinet minister, a member for the Tower Hamlets, a school inspector, or a stump orator in Hyde Park.

James buried him at a good old age, and, as he did not apply to the magistrate after his death, according to his favourite plan, he lies horizontally, with his face to the east, by the side of his forefathers.

Anima.

ANIMA was a random girl, living in a random way ; caught by an innocent pleasure, and following it until it was guilty ; a creature of impulses passing into violent passions ; a mixture of good and of evil. There was something very noble about her, and something equally mean. You could see traces, not merely of a fallen, but of a degraded nobility. Doubtless she came of high ancestry, but her parents were fallen from their first estate, as were their parents before them ; and she, inheriting all their shame and corruption, lived as she was born ; nor did there seem any likelihood of her ever becoming anything better, or rather of her not descending from bad into worse, until the Great King's Son passed by and looked on her.

To the amazement of his court he pitied and loved her. He called her to come to him ; had her cleansed

from the filth which clung to her under her old and stained vestments, gave her a robe of exceeding whiteness, and bade her be instructed in everything befitting the bride of a king.

It was only by degrees that Anima awoke to any consciousness of the wonderful favour shown to her. She was apt to run off to her old ways, and start wildly away from advice and instruction ; but by degrees she came to see what she had been, and was, and might be ; and was filled with a burning love of her Benefactor. It was beautiful to see how she tried in all things to please him ; how she read his letters again and again, and kept them in her bosom ; how she knelt, forgetting all else, when he sent her his blessing by the hands of one of his servants ; how she came out glowing with the light of pure love, and her eyes like the evening star, when she came forth from the chamber into which she had been summoned to receive a fresh mark of regard, so amazing that she spoke of it to no one at that time.

The world stared at the girl, and talked of her. People did not call her beautiful, though she was marvellously lovely, because her beauty was not of the fashionable kind. But she was acknowledged to be very attractive, winning, and loveable, only with a

peculiarity and a kind of superiority, like that of genius, which was not approved. Not that she felt this, or willingly showed it. She was condescending without condescending, and on a level, through love, with all, except in their sins, and a being of marvellous patience and sweetness.

So the world looked on and wondered, and some thoughtful ones said, "He will send for her soon. She is ready now for her marriage. She is too good for us." But she went on in her rapture of love, and scarcely heard these remarks.

There was certainly something about Anima which the world might be fairly expected to criticise. People smile at anything original and different from daily routine, even though it be a good invention, and a very beneficial breach of routine. There are many people who would laugh, should S. John or S. Paul come into the room, if their dress was not all right, or if they spoke with an accent. The sense of the ridiculous is a dangerous sense.

Now, Anima was sometimes thinking of the king, when people were talking all round her; and so she did not hear what went on. When others were full of admiration at some new fashion, she was silent. It did not interest her, for she knew it did not interest

him. Then she used to go aside a good deal, and read, and think; and sometimes her lips moved without her speaking. Also she took a wonderful interest in things the world cared very little for, such as the sick, the poor, the ignorant, and especially great sinners. All this she did, remembering how poor and ignorant and sinful she had been, when the King took pity upon her. But all this the world did not understand, and sometimes it laughed at her openly, sometimes passed her by in cold silence, when suddenly it took to praising her up to the skies and courting her in every possible way, because the king of the world had taken a fancy to her, and sworn that she should be his.

Now, the king of the world had more influence than Anima thought. She had promised to have nothing to say to him, and she never went to his court. But when she heard his subjects say how much he admired her, how good she was, how useful, how delightful, how worthy of her Betrothed, how well she taught choirs to sing, with what exquisite taste she decorated the churches; how wise she was in her charities; how clever in all things, and what a superior woman; she was flattered, and pleased, and listened, and then was more pleased, and listened again.

Then she began to live her life double. She went

on in all her usual ways, but thinking of both kings at once, both of her Betrothed and of the king of the world ; and she thought she pleased both, and could go on pleasing both ; and she retired into her room less frequently and read the letters less often, and read the letters of the king of the world. Meanwhile she frequented public gatherings more, and did not hide herself as she used to do. She had lost, in fact, somewhat of the delicacy of her character.

By-and-bye, she had messages from her Betrothed, and was rather shocked by their sternness ; and she thought Him severe, and she inwardly rebelled against the constraint which the very thought of Him, and of her engagement to Him, laid on her ; and she threw off the thought with vexation. So the king of the world gained ground daily, and what he gained was lost by the Betrothed.

It is too sad to say, well-nigh too sad to think, what Anima gradually came to. She cast aside the pearls which her Betrothed had given her, and wore coloured jewels. She abandoned her white robe for gay clothing. She became very beautiful in the eyes of the world, sparkling, witty, sharp, clever, accomplished, powerful ; but—but—so grievously altered in the eyes of the thoughtful ! Her gentleness and patience and

sweetness were gone. Restless, dissatisfied, ill-tempered, she enjoyed nothing. And it were shame to say what companions she had, and how like she became to them.

So Anima lived and thought not, or, if she thought, dreaded the day when her first Love should call for her, send for her. She drowned the remembrance of that time in dissipating amusements. Such was poor Anima.

In the midst of all this, one of the friends of Anima died suddenly. Anima was with her, and saw her last agonies, and noticed how that the king of the world could do nothing for her in that extremity. To give a dying person more money, and the frivolous news of the day! Yet this was all. She returned home thinking deeply, and sat on so thinking at night. At last she raised her head and looked up, and as she did so, she felt an Eye resting upon her;—only an Eye. There was no face, no form, no voice; only an Eye. She knew at once Whose it was, and dropped on the ground.

Only an Eye, but she knew it was that Eye which once looked on a false friend and won him back on the instant. Only an Eye, which seemed to read all, see all, know all: but was it His Eye, or her eye? for

she also read all, saw all, knew all—all her sins, all her ingratitude, all her faithlessness.

First, it seemed only her own eye, the eye of her conscience; and she despaired. She rolled on the ground in an agony of fear, remorse, and despair. Then it seemed to be His Eye, for there was pity in It, love in It, hope in It.

She sprang from the ground, and stretched out her arms, saying, "Where art Thou? Let me see Thee again. Let me but hear Thee speak!" But there was no vision, there was no voice.

Several days and nights passed in this misery. At last Anima arose and said, "I will seek Him. I will follow Him. I will find Him again; I will perish in seeking, rather than not find, for I shall die if I find Him not. Woe is me for my ingratitude! Why did He love me? What was there in me that He should have chosen me and made me His Own? I remember my first condition, in what filth and neglect He looked down on me and pitied me. Was there ever such ingratitude as mine! O what a return! Why did I not love Him? And now do I love Him? At least I will die for Him. Yet, who knows? I may forget Him again. May I die first, may I die before I forsake Him again." So she wept.

Then she prepared for her search, saying, "All this evil is come upon me because I was not with Him. I am too weak by myself. Yet I might have been with Him in thought, in love, in His letters, and in that chamber. I will seek Him again, but, O, shall I find Him?" Then she tore off her gay clothing and jewels; but she did not put on her white raiment and pearls. They were gone. She set forth half naked in misery.

Wherever she wandered she inquired for Him. Some said, "I will tell you how you may find Him. Believe that you see Him, and you will see Him."

She tried, and a sort of vision appeared, but it vanished. It was not He Whom she sought.

Another said, "Occupy yourself in works;" she did so, and saw only the works, and herself in the works.

Then another said, "You cannot find Him at once. Be patient, and endure, you have much to go through," and so she found it to be; for the world soon began to take notice of her again, and encourage her, saying, "Cheer up, come back, and enjoy yourself; no need of so much anxiety," but she felt in her heart that there was need.

So she set out again on her search, and once in a church, and once in a hospital, she caught a glimpse

of Him, and she thought He looked at her, and then He was gone.

At last she found a wise man who called her aside, and said, "I have a message for thee from Him." So she turned: and first he listened to all her long tale of sin and of sorrow; and then gave her a message of pardon and peace, and took her again into that sacred chamber, where she heard and saw unspeakable things.

Then he said, "Stay at home. Live unknown and watch, and work in great humbleness; and wait till He speaks."

So she did, and people noticed a gradual change. The innocent countenance and manner returned; and the brightness of her eyes was not that cold shining which they had acquired in the world, but a soft lustre, as of sunbeams in showers; and the sweet winning expression came back. She became what she had been, only quieter; shrinking more and more from all observation; and occupied in kind deeds which none saw, being often in secret, and reading the letters.

Often Anima wept, and never seemed so happy as when she had wept. Then she shone like a rainbow, and at times she had glimpses of her Beloved. So her life glided away.

At last a message came to her, a call : none knew how, and she rose and went out, not eagerly, but at once. Fearing and longing she went ; and came to the gate of a garden, which opened ; and she saw into it, and beheld bands of spirits in white, and a glory, and she heard sounds of music, yet entered not in ; but knelt at the wicket.

Presently she heard steps approaching. She lay down, crossed her arms on her breast, and closing her eyes waited breathlessly. The steps sounded nearer and nearer ; and then a voice, *that* voice spoke, saying, " Arise ;" and she rose and cast herself at His feet ; but He lifted her up and gave her the white raiment and pearls whiter and brighter than ever, with the whiteness and brightness of light ; and looked at her the while ; and that look seemed to transfigure her, for she became like an angel, and followed Him into the garden, and left Him no more.

The Schoolmaster.

A YOUNG MAN became candidate for the office of schoolmaster at a grammar school in a large town, the appointment to which was in the hands of trustees. He went round to them severally to obtain their votes ; and endeavoured to make himself acceptable to each in his turn. To do this, it was necessary for him to have no views of his own, nor, indeed, of anyone else ; because, to hold a view which pleased one man, was to have an opinion which offended another.

Accordingly, when he called on the mayor, he was put into a difficulty.

The mayor said at once that he wished to make physical science an important part of the school work, and added, "Now, I should like to know, sir, whether you hold that rivers run up or down ?"

"Well, well," said the candidate, hesitating, "that

depends. You see, sir, there is a good deal to be said on both sides. On the one side, you may say that you can see they run down, and that a piece of wood will float towards the sea ; but, on the other, it may be urged that we must not trust to our senses ; and that, as mists ascend, so larger portions of water may be expected to follow the same general law. And then, sir, you would not get on, if you put the thick part of a wedge in first. You insert the point. Just so it is easier for the slender part of the river to force its way than for the broad mouth. Besides, the sea clearly does not want water, whereas the land does. It is reasonable to expect, therefore, that rivers should flow inland and upwards."

Then asked the mayor, "What are your views of attraction ? Do you consider that the smaller body attracts the larger, or the reverse ?"

"It is quite an open question, sir," replied the conciliatory candidate. "The stone which you throw up in the air seems drawn to the earth, and I am bound to say that this is the more common and probable opinion ; but then, on the other hand, we must remember that common opinion is often erroneous, especially if it be antiquated, and that children are more attractive often than their parents, though

they are much smaller ; and sixpence will attract a thief ; and the moon attracts the sea, which our own eyes show us to be much the larger of the two."

"Very good," said the mayor ; "I perceive that you are a candid and dispassionate man. I was going to say unprincipled ; but, of course, I mean not attached dogmatically to your own views, or any views. You will have my support."

Next, one who was a dabbler in mathematics, inquired whether the candidate did not think that Euclid was too dogmatical, and whether it was justifiable to say that parallel lines never meet.

"I do not think it is justifiable," replied the applicant ; "for though the world has existed perhaps millions of years, yet an accurate observation has not been made all that time ; and who can say whether parallels have not met, or may not meet in another million of years. It is best not to be positive. Extremes meet, and the ends of parallel lines are extremities."

"What is your definition, sir, of a trapezium ?" inquired the trustee.

"I will reply," said the candidate, "in the words of a very sensible youth, who was under examination, 'It entirely depends on what you call a trapezium.'"

"Very good indeed, capital!" exclaimed the trustee.

The next trustee was all for languages, and he asked whether the candidate thought that the substantive agreed with the adjective or the reverse.

"Why, sir," was the answer, "it is a mere question of words; and I think it is much safer to say that they agree with each other, because, if I agree with you, but you don't agree with me, there is no perfect concord."

"You are my man," was the answer.

Our candidate was not always, however, so fortunate. One trustee asked what were his religious principles.

He replied, "Principles! I should rather say views, sir, opinions. In these days, when science is throwing so much light upon truth, and old prejudices are giving way to enlightened and enlarged views of—the origin and history of our species. . . ."

"Really, sir, I have no time for all this," broke in the trustee. "Just say what you are, if you can."

"Then, sir," said the candidate, with a mortified but subservient air, "my views are as wide as our common humanity."

"As broad as they're long," said the touchy old

fellow, "and as shallow. I'll tell you plainly, sir, *I* have an opinion of my own, and a belief too, and I believe this, that you don't know what you believe, and what you should teach, and are not fit for your office. Good morning, sir."

This trustee, however, was regarded as singular in his opinions, and his opposition at the board had no effect.

In this way before he had done his rounds the candidate had maintained that Mahomedanism was prior to Christianity, because it is more like Judaism, and afterwards the reverse; that Monarchy and Republicanism, teetotalism and wine-drinking, are all best; and so he got the appointment.

Having got it, he had to proceed at the same pace of subserviency. One week there was corporal punishment, and the next none. Now it was science; then all classics; then history. Now there were prefects, hats, bags, gowns, caps, &c.; then all these were abolished.

One day, however, he was very unlucky. He went down the river-side with the sixth form. The boys wanted to bathe. He knew it was dangerous, but they threatened to complain of him if he refused. He, having no power, consented, and half the sixth

form were drowned ; whereupon he lost his appointment.

After he was gone, it was said that people made a great mistake in maintaining that he had no views of his own : for he had a very definite and very persistent view, namely, the advancement of his own interest ; only, very unfortunately for him, he did not know his true interest.

That, however, which completed the Purgatory of the poor man was this, that he married a woman who had an opinion of her own, and a very decided one.

Christmas.

IT was before service, on the last Sunday before Advent, that Charles was speaking with pride of his parish church to a stranger.

“You may go for many miles,” he said, “and not see such a lovely church as ours, nor hear such singing, nor see such a congregation.”

But the stranger made no reply.

Charles was vexed at his silence. He began over again, and spoke more loudly than ever in praise of his church.

At last the stranger answered, “I shall be sorry to undeceive you. I like you to take a hearty patriotic interest in your parish ; but you should not boast of it, nor set it up as a pattern. Things are not always that which they seem to be. Would you know the truth?”

Charles felt vexed, but he could hardly help saying,

"Yes." The stranger at once touched his eyes, and they passed into church together, as the service commenced.

Charles began, as soon as he entered, to use the strange new faculty of sight which had been so wonderfully lent to him for a time.

He saw two neighbours kneeling side by side and praying, but there was a wall between them, and a canopy over their heads, and their prayers seemed to fill the enclosure and surround them like a mist, not ascending.

"They are out of charity with each other," whispered the stranger.

Charles next observed a man who had seemed alive and well, as they went through the porch, but now he was apparently dead. Only his lips moved, like those of a doll.

"What is this?" he inquired.

"The body is here," he replied, "nothing more. Heart and mind are alive and well, and hard at work on the farm. So he is as one dead whilst he is here."

Next he looked at the miller, and to his astonishment noticed that his coat was all over flour.

"He never changed it," said the stranger. "The

farmer came here, and went back again, so you see he has his best coat on ; but this man came into church just as he was, and so he appears to you."

Charles saw many people reading books, but they did not seem like Prayer Books or Bibles. In fact, one was a ledger, another a novel; and even one of the clergy was reading a pamphlet ; that is to say, in their minds they were doing these things, and they appeared to Charles as they were doing them.

Then he looked at a woman, well dressed and seemingly well educated ; and, to his amazement, he saw her both remain where she was, and yet get up and go about the church, stopping and looking continually at different persons.

The stranger saw that Charles required an explanation, and he gave it.

"Her body," he said, "is praying, if bodies can pray, but she is going round to observe her neighbour's dress, and see the fashions, and compare herself with them."

By this time the Psalms began, and Charles looked at the choir, and watched the sweet innocent faces of the boys ; and to his amazement he saw a silvery cloud rise from one mouth straight up into the lofty roof ; while from another a sort of mist flowed on a

level, and spread towards the people, and then disappeared.

“One is singing to God, and, therefore, his psalm ascends,” said the stranger; “the other is singing to men.”

After a time the sermon began, and Charles saw some sleeping with their eyes open. And others taking something to pieces, and, whilst laying by parts, throwing the rest down.

“They are choosing out what they know, and throwing away what they don’t know,” explained the stranger; “and that person is storing up every hit at her neighbour, whilst all the remarks which might do her any good, all that is about her own faults, you see she throws on the ground and tramples on.”

“Have you seen enough?” he continued.

“Yes,” replied Charles sadly, and the two went out with the great mass of the congregation after the service.

“Then I will show you a picture,” said the mysterious person, and he took a picture out of his pocket in which Charles saw Christ calling on His people to give to the poor, and inviting them to come to a feast which was spread at the end of the church. Christ opened His arms to embrace men; but they turned away, some

sullenly, some lightly, chatting as they went, and so passed out.

Then the stranger put his finger on one figure in the picture. Charles looked at it. It was himself.

They met again at Christmas, and the stranger touched his eyes, saying, "You will not see all, only a few of those whom you saw before."

In church, Charles looked around. The two neighbours were no longer divided, and their prayers went up as incense to Heaven. The woman no longer wandered round the church; and both the boys were singing straight up to the sky. But two of the careless ones were not present. They were not far off, however. They had been to church again—to be buried, and were lying in their graves outside in the churchyard.

"Do you wish to know what has made this great change?" asked the stranger.

"No, sir," replied Charles. "I am about to make my first Communion now, and what has touched me has, I doubt not, touched them."

"What was it?" inquired his companion.

"Fear and love," replied Charles. "Fear of Christ and His glory as Judge; love of Christ in His humiliation at Bethlehem. Advent has reached me

at last. I was hollow, vain, heartless. I deceived myself. Pray God I am not deceiving myself now.

“My friend,” replied the stranger, “if ever you feel disposed to be vain of your service, think of what it is in God’s sight, and of what you are in the light of His Justice and Mercy ; and compare your worship with that of the wise men at Bethlehem, and of the angels who sang at the birth of your Saviour. I opened your eyes to your sin. Now go in and open them to your happiness, and behold your dear Lord, who in it was truly present on the Altar for you, clad in vestments of earth, like as He lay swathed in swaddling clothes in the manger at Bethlehem.”

Charles listened, and whether his eyes were dim with tears, or the people hastening to church intervened, he lost sight of the stranger, though not of his teaching.

The Call.

TWO heaps of bones, a rusty blade
And mouldering lance in ruin lie
Where his faint limbs the hunter laid,
And closed his heavy eyes—to die.
All day beneath the forest shade
His own name sounded through each glade,
His own name mournful echoes made.
“Who called?” he cried, “Come, come” it said,
That wondrous voice: he turned his head,
But only heard the dry leaves fall,
As one by one dark autumn’s pall
They helped to spread; and through the pine
On which the fading sunbeams shine,
Bursting through with flurried wing,
The stock-dove made the forest ring.
All one red haze the sunset showed:
His track was like a magic road,

Dubious and hopeless. Sight and sound
Revolved in endless circles round,
And still "Come, come," till fell the night.
Through marble columns dazzling white,
By the cold moon's deceiving light,
He ceaseless climbed each silvered bank,
Dived in each sombre glade, and sank
In sedgy hollows dark and dank ;
And still the voice, "Come, come."—At last,
At the dread call, his spirit passed.
Close to his dead watched night and day
The dog, and scared each beast of prey,
Till slowly by his master's side
He stretched his wasted limbs and died.

This is the call the poet heard,
Like the note of some foreign bird,
And ceased to write, and only wept ;
Left his unfinished lay, and slept.
This struck the miser ; and his gold
Fell from his dying hands untold.
This summons monarchs from their throne.
This bids the widow weep alone.

Ah desolate ! who year by year
Longed that herself that call might hear ;
But death, when wished for, draws not near.

The hunter rising from her side,
Ere break of day, had left his bride
Without one kiss, or dear farewell,
Or any gage his love to tell.
Yet it was love which would not wake her ;
Unkissed, unkissing, to forsake her,
Enduring thus.—His distant horn
Brake off her dream in misty morn.
Gone ! gone !—How tedious was that day !
And when at last it wore away,
The wished-for even came in vain ;
For love's impatient step again
Shall nearer, nearer, to thy door
Sound—wistful watcher—nevermore.

Far from that lonely cot removed
By friends to haunts no longer loved,
Broken, and bowed, and pale, and grey,
Her life too slowly wastes away ;
And oft and fervent doth she pray,
And still shall pray till her latest breath,
“Call me, my God, with Thy call of death.”

Spring and Autumn.

HIS arrows rattled as he trod,
With proud step like the Delphic God,
Scattering the dew-drops ; whilst the scent
Of the frayed bracken heavenwards went,
Fragrant as incense ; nor looked back
To home, but held an onward track,
Until he thrust aside the spray
Of the faint odorous may,
And burst into a glade where grew
Myriad flowerets white and blue.
Spring breathed herself ; the balmy air
A thousand melodies did bear
Of undulating joy ; and there
A maiden rose, and waved aside
Bright tresses which a face did hide,
Fair as Diana. All his pride
Sank like a wavelet on the side

Of some deep cave. They looked : they spoke ;
And soon their gladsome way did take
In one ; and, bolder grown, would make
The still glades from their dreams awake,
With word, and laugh, and carol song ;
Whilst hour by hour they strolled along,
Through springtide mead, and vale, and grove,
Lost in an ecstasy of love.

Still rose the sun, and soon his light
Made the mossy beech trunks bright
With playful hues, as thus they wound
Their way athwart the tawny ground
Rustling with leaves, until they past
Into a forest dark and vast,
Wherein their noiseless feet did rest
Upon the pine's discarded vest
Amid a maze of columns. Way
Was none, for all was path. No play
Of dancing sunbeams. Herb nor flower
Confessed the vivifying hour ;
But naught to them was strange and drear ;
Nor felt they toil, nor knew they fear ;
Whilst form, as heart to heart, was near.
They sang of some Elysian plain
Beyond the hills, where grief and pain

Are not. And still they forced their way,
Like Spartans to the Dorian lay,
Victors. Next broken rocks appeared
And distant gleams, while as they neared
The forest edge ; then shrubs ; then light ;
And straight the mountains on their sight
Burst sudden in their awful might
With crag, and rift, and sheer descent.
They paused, embraced and upwards bent
A slower step ; whilst overhead
The gathering storm its pall outspread.

PART II.

Who is this with cautious pace
Down the mountain's westward face
Descending slowly, stone by stone,
Conversing, though he walks alone ?
And now beneath the ancient trees,
He seems to listen to the breeze.
Silent as death the leafy ground ;
Yet somewhat he doth seem to hear,
And, frequent resting, searches round
As though or hate or love were near ;
And now he dashes off a tear,

And forwards moves. His cloak is rent,
His buskins are with blood besprent ;
His quiver gone.—A broken bow
Serves for a staff. His step is slow,
But once a hunter's ; and his face
And form still keep their ancient grace,
But not the freshness ; yet his eye
Shines with an immortality.

He pauses where the beech woods cease
In beauty, not of joy, but peace,—
Autumnal beauty. Springtide's green
And downy leaf no more are seen ;
But every rainbow hue is there,
And gentle is the evening air,
Which sighs amid the purple groves,
And whispers dead and deathless loves.

Down lawny slopes he softly glides
To where the hill-sides gently sink,
To the last crimson copse which hides
The swollen river's rippling brink.
There the ruby hawthorn glows,
Once glistening white with floral snows.
The starry quatrefoils there shine
Of spindletree ; the briony
Which wound a tortuous way on high,
Strings its gay beads ; and red as wine

The dogwood leaves the brake illume,
Where clematis aspired to bloom,
And dying hung its trophy plume.
The redbreast and the blackbird sing,
For autumn's thoughtful ear, not spring.
Sets the old sun, and sets the year ;
And he stands watching, like a seer,
The deep horizon. O'er the lea,
Bright gleaming as the western sea,
He sees the golden towers arise,
And flash their glory to the skies ;
And godlike forms of lucid white,
With eyes like stars on Christmas night,
Stand on the brink and wait.—He prays,
And softly on the margin lays
His broken bow, his tattered vest ;
Then on the stream reclines his breast,
And steadfast seeks the better shore ;
Attains it ; and is seen no more.

Sige.

THERE was a town which had gone on a long time in a quiet, and perhaps rather sleepy sort of way. Still there was a fair amount of good work done there : schools, hospitals, and the like. Into the midst of this city dropped one day, like a bomb into a besieged fort, a Greek lady named Polypragmosyne. It is rather a hard name, and suits the hard work which she set herself and her followers. She took the bull by the horns very speedily, shook up the mayor, and the clergy, and the married women, and the single, and the young men, and the girls, and every one she could lay hands upon. Very soon the place was a nest of societies, meetings, &c. There was not an old wall which was not covered with placards. There were niggers to be seen and heard, singing classes, mothers' meetings, ladies' co-operative benevolent associations, &c., &c. : all very good things

in their way, but, somehow or other, they were managed in such a manner that they seemed to old folks to do as much harm as good.

In particular, there was a charming girl, named Rhoda, who used to be as modest and gentle as one could wish ; and she acquired, under the guidance of Madame Polypragmosyne, a sort of fussy, business-like, hard way, so that she was no longer as winning as formerly ; and some people said of her playfully, "No rose without thorns."

She was not the only person thus injured. The clergy rushed about, and gave up reading, and seemed always in a fuss. There was no repose anywhere except in the old square parlour-like pews of the church ; just where there should have been none. A complete language of benevolence and religion was formed ; and people were expected to express themselves in it, or else were counted for heathens ; and everybody talked of his feelings and experiences, and privileges, until he had none left of the first, and the second were mere repetitions of empty imaginations ; and the third consisted of a right of unlimited talking. Those who did not take to religion were quite as bad in their way ; and talked of humanity until it was gone ; and what with biology, anthropology, physi-

ology, &c., &c., they wearied quiet people beyond endurance. However, we are not concerned with the whole population, but only with that sweet girl Rhoda, who was opening her flower too fast, and losing her grace.

Now, it was so, that another Greek lady came into the town. She was generally driven out by her notorious countrywoman ; but, in this case, she became unlike herself for a time, and was so far aroused, that she followed, instead of fled ; and seemed determined to remedy some of the mischief done by the well-meaning Madame Polypragmosyne.

The first step which she took was to try and get hold of Rhoda ; and a very hard job she found it ; for Rhoda was nearly always from home, and when she took up her needle, at the wish of her mother, and began to mend her torn and decaying clothes, she was always interrupted by a letter, or a caller, or some interference or other.

However, one morning, the old lady Sige, for that was her name, did catch Rhoda at home ; and after darning her stockings for two hours patiently, got her to come out for a walk.

It was a sweet spring morning, and Rhoda felt a stillness of spirit as she walked with her silent com-

panion. Indeed she always found, when with her, a strange calm steal over her ; and holy and beautiful thoughts came into her mind, which seemed suggested by her friend's very presence, when nothing was said.

As the two went together, they came to the river-side ; and Sige said to it, "Tell the maiden what you are doing." But the river rolled on in silence, and Rhoda waited in vain for an answer. Whilst waiting, however, by the silent stream, she could not but see that the river was useful, though quiet ; and that beautiful meadows were glowing with verdure along its banks, and trees whose roots sucked the sweet waters, were bursting into new life all around.

Then they went into the cornfields, and Sige called out, "Spring, show the maiden what you are doing," but Spring replied not. Only Rhoda saw the corn rising through the ground, and the buds swelling, and flowers opening ; and she felt the gently-whispering breeze to be life-giving.

So they walked on thinking until evening, and Sige said, "Dew, tell the maiden thy work," but Dew replied not. Only the fainting herbs lifted their heads, and the fields glistened with diamonds, and a sweet restful freshness became an atmosphere in which the earth slept.

“We must go home now,” said Sige. “Your mother will wonder where we have been.”

And as they walked, they passed an old church ; and in the angle, between the transept and nave, they came to a Calvary, such as you see in some countries abroad. And Rhoda looked at it, and said, “Come into the church, Sige, and remain with me, whilst I pray.”

So they went in and knelt ; and whether it was, as she thought ; or whether a weary sleep came over Rhoda, I know not ; but it seemed to her as if it were real Calvary, and she were seeing all that took place.

She seemed to feel a great silence, broken now and then by a harsh voice ; after which, the silence was deeper ; and then a voice was heard from the Cross, and then a deeper silence ensued.

Long she knelt, but at last she rose up, and beckoning to Sige, began her walk home : thinking the while how much greater is bearing than doing, and patience than daring, and meditating on the silence and quietness of God’s greatest works.

After this, Sige became Rhoda’s daily companion and when Polypragmosyne left the city, which was worn out, disgusted, and disposed to greater sloth than before, Sige remained ; and tried to keep people from

falling back into idleness, and to induce them to work on in peace and retirement, until the sun should rise over the hills, and the eternal Sabbath begin ; and the rest of quiet, unconscious, unvarying, unwearying service of God.

Autonicus.

IN the days when knights went out for the purpose of encountering danger and of obtaining great glory by fighting, Autonicus was one of the most famous among men of old ; but not famous at first, nor without great difficulty.

The father of this knight died when his son was but a child, and his mother, who was all fondness, never controlled him ; but let him have his own way. The servants flattered him. He knew nothing of the world around him, and fancied that he could carry everything before him whenever and wherever he chose.

At last the time came when Autonicus should go forth and make his name in the world. He was tall, and apparently strong. His armour was bright, and shone like the lake round the castle when rippled by the clear eastern breeze ; and his huge war horse

pawed the ground, and seemed as impatient as his master for action.

On the day, on which Autonicus was to start, his mother fell ill. He went to her bedside to bid her farewell, and he saw in her face that she longed for him to put off his journey, but did not like to ask him to do so. He felt a misgiving, as he saw the pale features of her who had been so devoted to him, and observed her eyes fill with tears, when she saw that he did not offer to stay ; but he had been so long used to have his own way, that it seemed out of the question that the convenience of another should cross his plans, and delay him from carrying out his intentions ; so he kissed his mother rather more warmly than usual, and departed.

It was a fine sight to see the youth go out in his beauty and strength. It seemed as if nothing could withstand him, and that all opposition must go down before his courage and energy ; and, indeed, the expression of his face and his whole carriage showed that he thought so himself.

Autonicus had not ridden many miles when he saw a knight waiting at the skirts of a wood, and, as he drew nearer, he saw a beautiful maiden bound to a tree, whom this knight seemed to have seized.

Autonicus was fired with anger. Now was the time to succour the weak ; now to put down oppression ; now to show himself a true knight. He rode straight at the stranger with his lance couched, but the stranger leaped his horse lightly aside, struck Autonicus in the breast with his lance, and rolled him headlong to the ground.

In another moment, the knight placed his foot on his fallen foe, and called on him to surrender or die. Autonicus surrendered. He rose from the ground all covered with mud, and his beautiful plume broken off ; and, moreover, he had the extreme mortification of seeing two pilgrims, who had watched him in the morning issue forth in his glory, laughing at the sight which he now presented. One thing only remained to complete his humiliation, and that one was added. The captive damsel rejoiced in the victory of his foe. The truth was, that she had been rescued from robbers by the knight, just as Autonicus came up. There was not time to unbind her before Autonicus had impatiently dashed at the deliverer ; and now the fair damsel, rejoiced to see her champion gain a fresh victory, gave him her hand, and, riding off to her father's castle which towered over the wood, left Autonicus to enjoy his defeat, and to make his way

home without horse or armour, which he had to leave in the hands of the conqueror as the prize of the victory.

Autonicus was ready to sink into the earth when he passed under the gate of his castle in sad and shameful condition. So overwhelmed was he that he did not go to his mother, nor even inquire after her, but shut himself up in a room at the top of a tower, where he spent all the day in pacing up and down by himself. Next day his mother heard of his arrival and sent to him, begging him to come down and see her. He did so at last, and she received him with all her old love, and said all she could to console him.

It was not for some days that the Seneschal of the Castle ventured to speak to his lord on the subject of his defeat. At last, however, he did so, and tried to encourage him ; but he could not make out how it was that Autonicus had been overthrown by the hand of a man less noble than himself, and one not famous in arms. There was a mystery in it, something more than he knew. However, after a time, the Seneschal thought he had hit on the reason of the disaster, and, after much thought as to how he should best impart his views to his master, he told them to him ; but Autonicus was greatly enraged, and broke away from

his counsellor, and it seemed as if the Seneschal's good advice were all wasted. It was not so, however. Autonicus, whilst he rejected the most important part of the counsel, and that which went most against him, resolved to be more cautious next time.

In the course of a few weeks the mother of Autonicus died and was buried. Autonicus seemed to grieve for a time ; but his temper was soured, and he became so tyrannical at home that his dependents were delighted to hear that he meditated a fresh expedition. A horse and arms were prepared, and Autonicus sallied forth to try once more what he could do.

As he rode through the forest the sun shone brightly, the birds sang, everything was beautiful in the spring-tide, and his spirits rose as he went. On and on, through many a lovely glade he passed ; at length he came to a river, crossed by a narrow stone bridge which was guarded by a fierce-looking man in black armour. Autonicus roused himself from his dreamy ride and, shouting to the stranger, asked whether he meant to prevent his crossing the bridge. To this the man in black made no answer, but stood with his lance couched, ready to defend himself, if attacked. Autonicus again demanded whether it was not the King's highway, free for all to pass over ; and again no

answer was given. This insult excited the anger of Autonicus, and he began to forget the wise advice of the Seneschal, and to advance with more speed than caution. As he drew near, the black knight spoke at last, crying, "Come on, noble rescuer of maidens! Come, with your new horse and armour! Come, and receive your second defeat!"

Autonicus was furious at these words. He struck his spurs into his horse and dashed on to the bridge at full speed; as he did so, his horse's legs slipped from under him on the smooth stones, and, without striking a blow, Autonicus felt the black knight's foot on his breast, and only escaped by again surrendering armour and steed.

It is impossible to describe the shame and mortification which overwhelmed the poor youth on his second return home. He ordered the castle doors to be closed, and would see no one. His father's old friends were denied admittance when they came kindly to condole with and advise the son of one whom they had respected and loved. Month after month passed by. Autonicus was a torment to himself and to all in the castle, and no one knew how to obtain any relief from this state of things.

Whilst matters stood thus, Autonicus was informed

that a neighbouring noble was trying to raise an army to chastise a wandering band from the desert, which did infinite mischief, harrying the peaceable country, and vanishing as soon as pursued. Autonicus caught at the news. He thought that he might win a command and obtain glory through it, without having the whole responsibility. It was something gained, that he thus shrank from the management ; it looked as if he had fallen a little in his own opinion ; and so truly he had ; but, unhappily, conceit was not his sole weakness.

Autonicus was not long in carrying out his new project. Again he sallied forth, and, as he was not now a knight-errant, or single knight going out in search of solitary combats, he took with him some of his servants, and reached the camp of the chief who had set the expedition on foot.

On arriving, he went straight to the tent of the leader and sent in his name. Whilst waiting for answer, he had the extreme mortification of seeing a smile pass over the faces of the attendants on hearing his name ; and further back, where they were less visible, the servants did not scruple to whisper and laugh.

The chief, however, was an old friend of the father

of Autonicus. He did not believe it possible that any son of such a father could possibly be a coward, and he resolved to do what he could to rescue his friend's son from contempt. Accordingly, he came out at once from his tent, received his visitor graciously, conducted him in, introduced him to the knights assembled in council, and said, on so doing, "Sirs, you all know, or have heard of, the famous knight now at rest, the father of this noble youth, who, from some strange and unaccountable circumstances, has hitherto failed to gain the glory which his father's son cannot but obtain in the end; I pray you to receive him as the son of our dear neighbour departed, and as my personal friend."

The eyes of Autonicus filled with tears when he heard these kind words, and still more so when the knights came forward in numbers to clasp his hand and to welcome him. He thought his troubles were over, and he gratefully accepted a somewhat inferior post, resolving, by obedience and care, to justify the generous confidence of the leader.

Next day the army started on the expedition in hand. They passed through a country left desolate by the ravages of the foe, and, full of indignation, hastened on to overtake, if possible, the enemy on

his retreat, and despoil him of his unrighteous gains.

During the expedition, the pursuers came up, from time to time, with scattered portions of the retreating force, and, after some sharp engagements, they succeeded in taking many prisoners, and rescuing some of their fellow-countrymen who were being carried off to be sold into slavery.

In one of these encounters Autonicus crossed a gigantic Sheik, and after a severe conflict unhorsed him, and took him prisoner into the camp. The spell was now broken. The knights hastened to his tent to congratulate the victor, and the name of Autonicus stood as high in the army as before it was low.

As a testimony to his merit, and out of regard to the memory of his father, the leader detached Autonicus shortly after with a hundred men, to follow a retreating band to the left, enjoining him on no account to pursue the foe more than three leagues from the army, and to rejoin it, at latest, on the following evening.

Flushed with victory, and overjoyed by the confidence of his chief, Autonicus set forth; and as he galloped after the foe, all the despondency of the past disappeared. He entirely forgot it, and with it, the wholesome lessons which it had taught him.

On they pressed, and each mile that they rode seemed to bring them nearer to the retreating squadron; but still they had not come up with them. So night fell on the band. They lay down for rest by their horses, and long ere daylight they were in the saddle again.

It seemed that the enemy had halted as well as themselves, for they saw a cloud of dust about two miles ahead, and, gleaming through it, the flash of the arms. They galloped on and on, until the horses could do no more, and they rested by a well in the heat of the day.

They were now many many leagues from the main army; but so full of zeal were they all that none remembered, or wished to remember, their orders. On they went, and at night halted, as they had done before.

When nearly all the men were asleep, one or two of the older warriors came softly up to Autonicus; and gently suggested to him, that they were exceeding their orders, if not disobeying them; that they were getting dangerously far into an enemy's country; and that it would be best to return.

Autonicus listened impatiently, bade them mind their own business, and threw himself on the ground by his horse.

Next day they set forth again, but he could not but observe an altered look in the men. They were weary

and disheartened, and some of them looked sulky and ready to disobey, if they dared. The sun grew hotter and hotter. The sands seemed to refract as much heat as the sun gave. No trees, no hills in the distance; but an endless desert stretched out. The powers of man and beast began to give way.

They halted at noon, but not by a well. There was none; and the suffering occasioned by thirst was becoming intolerable. Autonicus saw the men clustering in groups, and talking one to another. He knew what it foreboded. Suddenly they rushed on him, and bound him; and he found himself a prisoner tied on his horse.

He now knew not only his folly, but fault; but it was too late to mend. At the last bivouac that night, they heard shouts all around them; and in a few minutes the whole troop were prisoners in the hands of the enemy.

Autonicus now felt his full misery. The whole band were lost through one man, and that man himself. They were being carried off league after league into the very heart of the enemy's country, whence escape was impossible; and the shameful and cruel life of slaves awaited them all, through his folly, and sin.

It was a strange life, upon which Autonicus now

entered. He was an ordinary slave. Sometimes he worked in the fields, sometimes in the house. He was struck, kicked, and spat on. All around him were enemies and idolaters; and if he saw one of his captive countrymen by chance along the road, groaning under his burden, he was met by looks of contempt and hatred; and he knew that he deserved them too well.

For a long time Autonicus writhed under his misery, and like a serpent trodden on, returned injury with venom. He never prayed. He had no hope. All was black.

At last, the sight of a dying woman recalled his mother to him. He remembered all her love, and his own cold heartless return for it; in particular, his forsaking her, in her last illness, for his own vain schemes. His heart was softened, and he wept; and the more he wept, the more he seemed to have occasion for weeping.

Thus by degrees new thoughts entered the mind of the prisoner, and the lessons of unselfishness and lowliness which had been vainly taught him of old, like faint colours which want sunshine, came out in distinctness. The sunshine was not that of prosperity, but a light from Heaven itself.

Gradually Autonicus became an altered man. The

change showed itself in his returning good for evil, and in cheerful submission to his painful life; and soon he was found to be very useful, and superior to the work which had hitherto been assigned to him. He rose step by step; and at last, after some special service to the chief, he was offered his freedom.

Autonicus thanked the chief respectfully, and declined it. The chief was amazed, and insisted on knowing the reason. His reply was this—

“I brought my men into this bondage and I will never forsake them.”

The chief was wroth at first, and the only comfort Autonicus had from the proposal was derived from the voice of his own conscience and the altered manner of his fellow-captives; for the news of his noble answer soon spread, and came to their ears.

Six months passed on, more weary than ever, because an intense desire of home had been excited in the heart of the captive; less weary, however, in that he felt he had done right, and made some little atonement for his fault. At the end of that time the chief sent for Autonicus, and inquired whether he still adhered to his determination. The prisoner replied that he did, when the chief to his amazement made the following offer:—

“If,” he said, “you can conquer my champion, both you and your countrymen shall be free. If not, you are slaves to the end of your lives.”

Autonicus meditated before he answered ; which once he would not have done. He considered how that this was a great venture, and probably a ruinous one, and, on the other hand, that it seemed the only hope of freedom ; and so he accepted it.

Before the great day of trial, Autonicus spent much time in exercising his limbs, long disused to martial exercises ; and much time also he spent in prayer.

At last, the day came : he was armed in the captured mail and with the captive weapons of one of his men, and when he went forth into the lists, he beheld a man of his own size, and wonderfully like himself ; and not this only, but his opponent was clad in his own lost armour.

“I shall be fighting against myself. I shall perish by my own hands,” he said, “or else conquer myself ;” little knowing the truth of his own deep words. Neither did he know how, for he had already won the victory by previous triumph over self, in his hard bondage.

The trumpets flourished. The knights met full tilt ; and, to his surprise and joy, Autonicus beheld his enemy rolling on the ground.

In a moment he leaped from his horse, and with his foot on the conquered foe, he placed the point of his sword at the throat, where the head-piece parted from the breast-plate.

The fallen man did not ask for mercy ; and by the law of arms Autonicus would have been justified in taking his life ; but now he had not the heart to do it.

“Rise up,” he said, “and fight again.”

“No,” said the conquered man, “I am dying. The fall has killed me ;” and as he spoke a cold grey pallor passed over his face.

“Autonicus,” said the chief, “you have conquered and slain yourself. You and yours are free.”

Happy was the day on which a band of weary and dusty warriors stood at the gate of the castle, whilst one blew loudly the horn which called for admission. Happy were those who welcomed them. Happy from that hour were the dependents of their long-lost lord.

Autonicus was great in the council, great in war, great in peace. His effigy now lies in the castle chapel, carved in alabaster, richly gilt and coloured ; and the features are identical with those of the man he once conquered ; whose fall set free both himself and his men, and restored them to liberty and to home.

The Man with a Shadow.

THERE was a man who had a shadow. So has everyone except the silly fellow who sold his. But this man's shadow was peculiar ; it was visible by day and by night, and was just as long at noon as at morn and at eve. Not that it was always equally large ; it varied according to circumstances. There seemed to be a sun inside the man, and, according to his internal state, the shadow was longer or shorter, broader or narrower.

The man took the greatest interest in his shadow, as a reflex of himself. He was always watching it, and consequently was pre-engaged ; or, if there were such a word, in-engaged, self-engaged ; so that he failed to notice what was going on around him, except in so far as it affected his shadow.

Sometimes people said to him, " How well that man spoke yesterday ! " " What interesting information he

gave us ! ” but he seemed lost, and did not know what to reply, just as people do when they are asked about something, which they are expected to know, and do not.

“ What ? You were there, I know you were.”

“ Yes.”

“ And did not you hear ? ”

The fact was that he was watching his own shadow all the time. So he passed through life without getting any wiser. He never learned anything. He had no time to do so, because he was taken up with his shadow.

Once he made a grand speech in public, full of eloquent passages, learned quotations, sharp sayings ; and yet no one applauded. Half the people were yawning, and the other half asleep. If they had not been a very courteous set, some would have hissed, others hooted ; but they were too polite on that day to do so.

He, however, never looked at their faces, because he was watching his shadow. He never read their thoughts and feelings. If he had done so, he had plenty of wits to enable him to make use of the opportunity, or to “ utilize ” it, as people now talk. He could have brought down the house, if he had made a

single hit ; and, to make a hit, he had only to understand, and enter into the hearts and minds of his audience ; but he did not ; because he was watching his beautiful shadow, which grew larger every minute. So he was voted a bore ; and next day the report in the papers merely stated that “the gentleman with a shadow made his usual speech.”

Poor man ! Once, as he went to a great meeting, and was walking through the suburbs, watching his shadow, he fell down ; and rose up covered with mud. He went to an inn, and tried to get clean in time, but he could not. He heard that the meeting had begun ; so in he went with the relics of the suburbs upon him. No one noticed him there ; but that did not suit him. He watched his opportunity and began in the usual style ; and when he did so the hall began to get empty, and would have been quite so, had not some youth, devoid of the proper respect due to greatness, discovered the misfortune, and called out,—

“Go on, ‘Stick in the Mud!’”

Roars of laughter followed this sally ; and then the youth grew bolder, and other more timid wits gathered courage ; and every one had his joke.

“It’s a dirty business ;” “Hear the dirty fellow ;” “Give him time to clean himself ;” “I wonder whether

his shadow got dirty ;” “ Look at your shadow.” All these and many other remarks were shot at the head of the speaker, and confused him a little ; but when he remembered his shadow, and thought it was safe, he gathered courage again, and went on amid roars of laughter and cat-calls.

At last he looked down, and there to his terror saw that his shadow had diminished to an extent beyond all experience. He was horrified. There must be imminent danger. His life and the life of his shadow were bound up together. He must be on the verge of an illness. His shadow never looked so ill before. Thinking these things he wound up his address, and the crowd cheered him for that ; but as he went out, some trod on his shadow, which gave him terrible pain ; and some—shall we say it ?—spat on it.

Home he went very ill, really ill, seriously ill, dangerously ill ; and all through his shadow. He sent for a doctor. The doctor came, felt his pulse, shook his head, felt again, and departed. Presently the doctor’s man came with some bread pills and coloured water, to be taken every five minutes. Well,—yet not well ; for he grew no better ; he took a good deal of bread, and drank a good deal of dirty water ; which, as he had eaten a good deal of dirt

previously, had not much effect ; so at last he called in his executor.

When the good man arrived, he said to him,—

“ I am going.”

“ I hope not,” said his friend.

The shadow felt better at these kind words, and he felt better.

“ Yes, I am going ! I leave you the care of my wife and young family. You must edit my unpublished speeches and poems ; and all that you can realize over £10,000, which will be for my family, is your own.”

“ Ten thousand fiddlesticks,” said the executor.

The shadow grew smaller, and its owner felt very ill.

“ Do, my dear fellow. I shall be appreciated when I am gone.”

“ So you are now,” was the answer.

The shadow grew smaller, the owner became more ill.

“ Do.”

“ I won’t.”

“ What will you do, then ? ”

“ Burn ’em all.”

“ You cold-hearted man—no, not man—not worthy of a share in the glorious humanity of our race. I wish your shadow was ill.”

“ I haven’t one ; and never shall, please the pigs.”

“What? No shadow? And did the pigs eat it?”

“No! I wish they had eaten yours, when they saw it lie in the mud.”

There was a silence. The attenuated owner of the attenuated shadow had fainted. At last the executor remarked,—

“Why don’t you get rid of your shadow? That is what’s killing you.”

“I can’t.”

“You know it is that which is wearing you out.”

“Yes. But what can I do? Every time I see it look ill I feel ill; and lately—oh—lately——”

“Did you never hear about the king and the flies?” inquired his friend.

“No. Never.”

“O, yes, you must have heard, but you were looking at your shadow when you heard. One of our kings was walking in London on a hot summer’s day, and he remarked to his companion, ‘What a nuisance the flies are. They will keep getting into my mouth!’ ‘Why do you not shut it?’ was the reply. ‘I never thought of that,’ said the king!”

“But what has that to do with my illness?”

“A great deal. Why do you look at your shadow? Why don’t you make up your mind never to see it?”

“ I never thought of that,” exclaimed the sick man. “ How very odd ! I never thought of that. I will try.”

He did try, and gained strength immediately. Some said when they saw this, “ He is a shade better ;” but they soon became tired of the joke, for they perceived that he was perfectly well ; and they saw him lighting his evening pipe with his unpublished speeches and poems.

The Pointsman.

“**M**AKE a clean breast of it,” you say. Make
coals into snow.

Yer’ll say the same yerself, when yer come the truth
to know.

“If you’ve a load on yer breast.” For more nor
twenty year

Stone, bricks, lead, clay, have all been a-weighin’ on me
here ;

Here—here it lies—here—here. They may spare their
pains to tread

My grave down when I die, there’s load enough on
my head.

It bent me down at thirty, and brought me to this
place :

Yer may see it in my hair and in my eye and face.

I was a light-hearted youth, tall as you might see :

Bess and I were to marry next week as ta might be.

NOTE.—This is in Essex dialect.

Our cottage was ready. What wi' her savings and
mine :

'Twar furnished the old folk said a'most too grand and
fine.

I was happy as a boy, when he first drives or rides,
And could think o' nout o' nout i' all th' world
besides.

So a drop o' beer that was gi'n me took a' the more
effect

Along of the spirits I was in, as I expect.

I went to my box on the line: the goods' train war
due,

But I forgot to turn the points, though the time I
knew.

Truck over truck it com'd in; and I stood by to
see,

Feeling I might ha' stopped it and knowing how t'oud
be.

No one was hurt, but hundreds o' pounds damage war
done,

All through one man's neglect and fault, and I war
that one.

Next day I was discharged. I had a fever one Fall,
And didn't know night from day, nor my neighbours
great from small.

Just so it fared now, Sir, round and round afore my
sight

Bessy, wedding, cottage, ruin, kep' turnin' from morn
to night.

I daren't go home, but wandered all the rest o' the
week,

And cared no more nor a stone, to eat, or drink, or
speak.

No thought, no wish, no plan, but a dull ache day by
day,

Till, like the train—a roar—and the whole thing rolled
away.

Revenge—revenge—revenge; the devil sent me the
thought.

The devil was my teacher, I war the devil he taught.

I got up from whor I sat, and never looked behind,

Hell's rage was in my heart, a hellish plan i' my mind.

I placed a log on the lines, hid myself i' the grass,

And waited quietly there to see the train not pass.

There I lay and listened, till I heard the rolling sound,

And softly raised my head and warily looked around.

Nearer—nearer—nearer—the express came, like a
flash

Of lightning, on the metals; then the check and the
crash.

Carriage a' top o' carriage,—smash,—crash, and break
—and tear ;

The roaring of the steam, groans and cries fillin' the air.
Splinters fallin' all round like an', pieces of broken
glass ;

Men and women groanin' i' the wreck, or on the grass.
And I lay there who had done it, watching all their
woe,

Hardly daring to breathe, and afraid to stay or go.
At last I crep away, got up, looked about, and fled,
Fearing to be taken, and yet wishin' I wor dead.
They did not seek for me then, so many wor the slain ;
So many lying still in death or writhin' in their pain.
I fled and crossed the ocean, and walked wi' blistered
feet.

Fearing to see a railway, dreadin' a train to meet.
So I lived in the backwoods far off from any line,
But always in the noonday, and when the stars did
shine,

I heard a train a comin' nearer, and still more near ;
Rushin', rollin' towards me, and my knees would shake
wi' fear.

Dash and crash, groans and cries seemed to sound up
i' the air.

In vain I stopped my poor ears, for still the sound was
there ;

And still I seed the mangled, and still the glassy
eye :

Still I seed the wrecks o' dead men all scattered round
me lie,

And some men thought me cunning, whilst others
held me mad.

Whate'er I took in hand first or last went to the bad.

A curse was on my head, and a curse lay on my
heart,

The curse of the damning thoughts from which I could
na' part.

My crime drove me fro' home and then drove me to
return.

Cost what 'twould I must the fate of my poor Bessy
learn.

I walked again to port, and the big Atlantic crossed,
If I'd had to swim ten yards I'd ha' ben wholly
lost ;

For a load hung round my neck, a weight lay on my
breast,

Which no more let me move than ta would let me
rest.

Landin I walked to shun the line, creepin' nearer
home,

When on a level crossing I heard the engine come.

I could not breathe : both my feet seemed fastened to
the ground,

Whilst closer and yet closer rolled up the horrid sound.

It seemed as if the engine made at me like a foe,

And with a scream of vengeance it struck and laid me
low.

They brought me here all mangled like those poor
men I killed,

And my most righteous judgment is faithfully fulfilled.

My life is but a torture, and yet I dare not die.

I long for sleep and tremble to shut my heavy eye ;

Lest I should see it coming, the blood which I have
shed,

Bodies crushed, and broken limbs, the dying and the
dead.

I sought revenge and had it ; then vengeance sought
for me.

Hark ! hark ! I hear it coming. Help ! help ! I cannot
flee !

The Sea-wall.

ON the eastern coast of England there is a large tract of land redeemed from the sea, and protected from it by an earth-bank, or sea-wall ; which has its legal guardians, who have great powers assigned to them for its preservation. The wall does duty against two enemies ; on one side the German Ocean ; on the other, the tide running behind, up into the mainland. Generally there is no pressure upon it, but at spring-tides, especially when they are accompanied by a storm, the wall is endangered ; and, if it gave way, the redeemed land would be covered again by the sea. The farms protected by the wall are partly Crown lands, and partly Church property ; and hence part of the wall belongs to the State, and part to the Church.

Now, it came to pass that certain persons wished to see the ocean flow over these lands again, but they did not say this. No one would have listened to them, if

they had. So they suggested to others that the wall was old and ugly, and took up a great deal of room, and could be superseded by recent inventions, and was an obstacle to passengers, and not needed now, and did no good, but only harm.

At first people paid no attention to this folly, but by degrees they became used to the new opinion. It no longer appeared so strange and unreasonable; and many men who had no wish to behold the sea cover the land, began to look on a change as not unreasonable, as likely, and perhaps beneficial.

Besides, such a long period had elapsed since any inundation, that men had lost all fear of it; and had never seen the wall in full use, nor understood its value, or rather necessity.

So the agitation for removal became stronger, and the opposition more and more feeble; and at last the advocates for demolition thought themselves strong enough to act, and a great meeting was called to settle the question.

Then all was said that could be said for the removal of the wall; and the defence was weak, proceeding, as it did, chiefly from old people, who were considered prejudiced in favour of custom, and timid, and as enemies of all progress and improvement.

At the meeting, however, there was a rough hard-

handed, hard-headed man present, who asked all sorts of unpleasant questions.

At last he turned to the wall-wardens, who were charged with the maintenance of the barrier ; and asked them, how it was that some of them advocated the demolition, and whether they were convinced that it did harm, and that its removal was perfectly safe ?

They could not quite say "Yes" to this question, but they replied that the time was come "when something must be done."

He inquired, "Why?" and they answered,—

"Because people wish it. The public demand an alteration. Something must therefore be done."

"I'll tell you what that something is," said this hard man ; "we must get rid of the treacherous wardens, and have men who will act according to their best belief, and not go by an outcry."

This observation produced a good deal of merri-ment, but it did more than that. It led to the appointment of wardens who had more moral courage ; and the wall was left as it was, and so will be left ; for those who understand the question see plainly that it is either wall or German Ocean ; and very few wish to see the latter.

Moreover, the whole discussion has led to a salutary dislike of meddlers and of time-serving officers.

Bad Water and Air.

A LADY had two girls, twins ; and she asked a fairy to stand as Godmother to them. The fairy good-naturedly did so, and left as a gift at the baptism, a present of beauty, and wit, and sweet dispositions ; so that these girls grew up lovely and clever and amiable ; and everyone said, “What charming daughters ! how fortunate Mrs. — is ! they are all one could wish. I only hope they’ll not be spoiled. They are just the girls I should like my sons to marry.”

So things went on, and their mother relied on their perfections, and did not think they could possibly lose them ; and therefore took little care. Hence she was not very careful as to what persons came to the house, or as to what was said in conversation, and, in particular, she let them read every book that they could lay hold of.

The last was a fatal mistake. The girls soon got weary of the books which their Godmother gave them, which seemed dull and wanted sensation. They were on the watch for every new novel; and some people said that they read what ladies ought not to read.

However this was, the girls altered. There was something about them which one cannot describe, but which one dislikes exceedingly; and their admirers fell off one by one, until none were left except such as their mother did not approve of.

All this time the Godmother remonstrated frequently and all in vain. At last both the girls fell ill, and grew worse and worse, and the malady was pronounced to be typhoid.

Anxious days, anxious nights wore out the mother. There was no change for the better. The fever continued, and the patient's strength grew less and less, until there was little hope left.

During the illness, the mother naturally tried all she could to find out the cause of the sickness. "Where had they been? what had they done? They certainly had not visited the sick. That was not the reason."

Then the drains were examined, and the well-water

analyzed ; and it was satisfactorily proved that both air and water were full of germs of disease, if that can be called satisfactory.

About the time that this discovery was made, and in the midst of the intensest anxiety, the fairy appeared ; and the mother forgetting all former kindness, began to reproach her.

“What,” she said, “is the use of all your fine gifts ? You gave my girls graces and beauty, but now they will die, and all will be lost.”

“Have you kept what I gave ?” answered the fairy. “No ! you have given them poison to drink, and poison to breathe. You have killed them.”

“I did not know it,” returned the mother, “I loved them, and would have laid down my life for them.”

“Do you call this love ?” said the fairy, kicking a heap of bad books into the fire. “These are the poison. I have warned you, and all to no effect, and now you see the result.”

“What has that to do with the illness ?” asked the mother in anger.

“This,” said the fairy, “that I had rather they died than grow up as you are helping them to do.”

“Then you sent the illness ?”

“Of the body, not of the heart.”

“If I obey you henceforth, will they recover?” asked the poor mother, eagerly.

“If you promise to be as careful of their hearts as you now are about the air and the water of which they partake?”

“I promise,” she cried; and her daughters recovered.

The Holy Sepulchre.

IN the middle ages, as is well known, there was an intense longing in European Christians to behold the sacred places where the Lord had wrought, and suffered, and died, and rose, and ascended, for their salvation.

Amongst those who were thus desirous to become pilgrims were Eustace and Richard, sons of a knight in Sussex, who had been a Crusader, and came back with broken health, and broken fortune, to a broken heart; for he found his beloved wife lying in her grave, on his return.

Whether it was part of the general turning eastwards, or arose from the history of their father's campaign, or both combined, both the boys burned with an insatiable desire of visiting Jerusalem. Their property was so much reduced that they could not travel in the style of their father. They must go

afoot, or not at all ; but this was nothing to them. They saved up a little money by degrees, grew in stature, learned all they could at the Abbey school, and steadily looked forward to the day of departure.

Meantime two events happened. First, an uncle died leaving some ready money, so that the pecuniary difficulty of the scheme was removed ; secondly, the old knight visibly failed. The pain of his wounds was at times very sharp, and his spirits had never rallied since his return. He had no earthly pleasures except in watching his boys, and in doing what he could to form and strengthen their characters.

Richard all along took pleasure in arms, and was determined on going to the wars, on his return, under the pennon of some powerful baron. Eustace was a scholar, and, but that he felt his own deficiencies, would have aimed at the priesthood. As it was, he expected some day to become a lay brother in a religious community.

When the money fell in, Richard was highly elated, and so far carried away with his happiness, that he did not observe any change in his father, nor the well-concealed pain which the old man felt at the thought of losing his children ; and he hurried on the preparations with all the ardour of youth.

At last the time of departure drew near, and Richard was amazed and indignant when Eustace told him that he had given up his design, because he thought it was his duty to remain with his father.

At first Richard put no bounds to his anger. He reproached his brother with fickleness for giving up the long-cherished desire of his life ; and even went so far as to accuse him of cowardice, and of shrinking at last from the perils and hardships of the journey, which indeed were considerable.

Eustace made little answer. The two brothers had grown up side by side, apparently one ; but they had diverged unperceived, and now for the first time the passionate zeal of the one, and calm endurance of the other, became manifest.

The old knight also said little. He blessed Richard when he went, and blessed Eustace for remaining. A great sacrifice had been made by the latter in quietness. He did not know how much his father appreciated it ; and even the father did not know what it cost Eustace. It was a duty, and it was done ; and all went on as calmly, and tamely, most young men would think, as before.

Richard could not leave his old father, without a twinge and misgiving ; but they were soon over. The

incidents of the journey, and the glorious object in which it should end, soon blotted out any such feelings ; and on he went with his comrades, amazed and delighted with the change of countries and manners, and finding happiness in the toils and risks of the pilgrimage.

Richard took ship at Brindisi, after various escapes from banditti, and with a fair wind skimmed the blue face of the Mediterranean, listening to marvellous tales of Prester John and Saladin, and of Richard the lion-hearted. Day after day they sailed on, and forty-eight hours were to set their feet on the blessed shore, in the Christian city of Acre ; but suddenly clouds darkened the sky. A storm arose with marvellous swiftness, and of incredible fury. They drove before it perfectly helpless. The oars were broken ; the sails carried away ; the rudder became unmanageable. Huge waves broke over them. With the greatest difficulty the ship was prevented from broaching to, which would have been instant destruction. So they drove and drove, and a second night fell on them, in the midst of which they felt themselves lifted up on a huge billow, and dashed down on the ground like a thunderbolt from the skies. Then there was a roaring, and gurgling ; and a half-senselessness ;

but enough consciousness left to enable him to cling to the shore, and drag out a half-fainting body ; and to feel the cold and the misery until the grey morn ; when a glance seaward showed the sands covered with wreckage and corpses, and landwards a troop of Egyptian cavalry gathering the survivors together at the point of their lances.

So this was the end of Richard's pilgrimage, and these were his Holy Places. Mosques all around, and a scoffing master ; chains on his limbs, and work on the roads under a burning sun, in a hopeless captivity, were the result of the voyage.

Two years of this life made Richard another man ; not only lean, bony, hollow-eyed, but morose even to savageness. One night he dreamed a dream, and the second night dreamed it again, and the third likewise ; and then he told his tale to a fellow captive, a monk, who had laboured by his side day after day in great patience, and had sought to teach the gospel lesson to Richard, but all in vain ; and the tale which he told was as follows :—

He had passed under a pointed arch in his dream, such as he knew in his own country, and entered into a wonderful building. He went on, and, as he went, it seemed to correspond with what he had been told of

the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. He found himself in the beautiful Rotunda of the Emperor Constantine surrounded by columns, in the centre of which was the most sacred part, the Angels' Chapel, with the stone once rolled away, and beyond it the cave of the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord.

The Rotunda was full of persons kneeling silently, and adoring intensely. Richard looked at the countenances of some of them, and to his amazement beheld his father and brother kneeling there side by side. He did not feel frightened in his dream, but seemed rather to be full of wonder. He could think, and reason, and speak. He drew nearer to his relatives and said, "How came you here before me?" but they answered not.

Then he looked at them again, and saw that their eyes were full of strange and beauteous light; but they seemed not to see nor to hear him, but to be wholly occupied in adoration.

He paused, then touched his brother, or, rather seemed to touch him; and then repeated his inquiry. His brother turned towards him, laying his hand upon his lips, and pointed to the Sepulchre where the Lord had lain; then he slowly raised his finger pointing upwards; and his eyes seemed to

accompany the movement, and to be fixed on One unseen above.

So the dreamer awoke.

The monk heard all the tale, and said, "Thank God, my son. Thy father and thy brother are at peace. They have left this painful world, and rest."

"But how came they at Jerusalem?" asked the captive.

"The grave of Christ," replied the monk, "is not at Jerusalem alone, but, to the faithful, everywhere. Whoever is in Christ is buried in Christ's Sepulchre, and shall rise again in Christ's Resurrection."

"Then they have easily attained what I with so much pains have sought in vain," replied Richard.

"Perhaps they sought more worthily," answered the monk; "or if it were God's free gift, praise Him the more. In all things praise Him."

Richard learned at last to do so—to praise God even for his bonds.

These, however, were loosed in the end. Money was largely given by good people in Europe for the redemption of captives, and Richard returned to his native land, to find an empty home, and the graves of his beloved ones.

He now devoted himself to doing his home duty

and to inducing others to act like him. Many young men were by him dissuaded from going to Palestine, and squandering the treasure and blood of Europe there. They united in good works in their own land, restrained oppression, succoured the needy, and died in peace ; and when the longed-for day of rest arrived Richard also had his share in the Holy Sepulchre, with those who, still untravelled, reached the Holy Places.

Harry.

HARRY was a shepherd's son in Westmoreland. He seemed to be one of Nature's favourites, and was endowed with wondrous powers. It was not only that he drank in, lived on, revelled in, lake, mountain, wood, fell, river, cloud, sunrise and sunset ; that he had, in fact, an intense perception of the beautiful, but that he saw farther into things than the world sees.

In the song of the thrush at early morn he heard voices from another region than this. He saw angels rolling out the clouds, and spreading over the heavens, morning and evening, vestments of purple, blue, and gold. The sun was to him the Being whom it figures. Not that he adored it like the Easterns, but Him who made it. He used to give strange accounts to his equals in his native village, and old folks paused on their way to hear his wisdom ; whom, if he saw listening, he ceased like a startled bird : else he would

go on to tell in a low sweet voice of unseen glories, and unspeakable blessedness.

Whether he should be poet, painter, prophet, or die an early death, as too good for this world, no one knew ; but only this, that he was gifted with an eye and ear and mind and heart above his fellows ; and saw what others could not, and heard what others did not, and was what others were not, and was most beautiful in his life and hopes.

But Harry was not to die, nor be a poet, priest, nor painter, but by the poverty of his parents, and the intended kindness of an uncle, was driven into a huge city, where chimneys smoked, and wheels whirred, and wheels rolled, and crowds tramped ; over which a perpetual cloud of man's making hung, obscuring the bright sun, and through it the fresh air became tainted ; and beyond it nothing could be seen. Street upon street, warehouse after warehouse, manufactory upon manufactory ; these were what he saw from morning to night, from the year's beginning to the year's ending. So his life waned.

His life waned. Not that he grew weaker ; on the contrary, and unexpectedly, he grew tall and vigorous ; but his sight was dim, and his ear dull ; and not only all the beauty of the world and of life were taken away,

but he could not see them, even if present. He was changed. He was not what he was. His thoughts and pleasures were all different. He was an altered youth ; but he would never have known it, unless he had returned home for a holiday, and found the unchanging mountains changed, the river, trees, and skies no longer what they were. He scarcely enjoyed them, and the sights beyond and through them, and the wondrous voices had departed.

The old priest noticed this difference with sorrow, and sought the lad in private. Harry hesitated at first to allow, but, led by kindness, did confess the melancholy change, and at once some of the old feelings returned upon him, and made him long to have them back again in their former fulness. What could be done? He could not live among the mountains. The city must be his home. The remedy, if there was one, must be in himself, and not in his residence. This his old pastor knew, and counselled him to rise betimes, and see the sun before the cloud of smoke obscured the light ; and oftentimes during the day to behold in heart the glorious sights ; and at eve to court the stillness of the night, and gaze upon the blessed Heavens.

So he did ; and now he hears the old voices, sees

the old sights,—and more than these. A vision of beauty greater than ever he beheld before, beauty yet to be revealed, is manifested to him ; and not all the smoke and dust and whirl of the great town can veil it from him. He lives in the city, but not of it, beyond it, and above it.

Read the meaning, all ye who need it.

The Alms of the Poor.

THERE was a clever artisan whose wages rose and rose until he received more than the curate of the parish. He lived freely, and denied himself no enjoyment. He gave a shilling now and then to the widow of an old friend. Altogether he earned some £150 a year, and his charities might be calculated at ten shillings. He seldom came to church, and one day when the vicar called on him he stated his reasons without any scruple.

“You are always having collections,” he said; “I don’t like to refuse, and don’t choose to give.”

“Why will you not give?” asked the vicar.

“Because the rich ought to do that. You might go round to their houses and collect from them. You ought not to beg of the poor, and wring their hard-earned wages out of them in this way.”

“My friend,” said the vicar, “would you come if there were no collections?”

"Yes," he said.

"Why would you come?"

"Why, to hear."

"Not to pray?"

"Well, yes, to pray too."

"Cannot I say your prayers for you, and leave you to enjoy yourself?"

"No! a man ought to pray for himself."

"If I cannot say your prayers in your stead, can I give to God in your stead?"

The man was silent.

"Lucy," said the vicar to his daughter, "tell our friend the tale you were reading yesterday to the children at school."

Lucy blushed, and began,—

"A labouring man fell asleep thinking of Heaven, and in his dream an angel stood by him, and offered to show it to him. The angel led the way, and they came to a beautiful garden, so beautiful that no words can describe it. The most gifted painter can draw no likeness of it, do what he will.

"The garden was divided into portions, some greater, some less; some more lovely, some less so. In each plot the owner was occupied in attending to it. No one was idle.

“The dreamer gazed at the scene for a long time in silence, and then recovering himself, began to ask questions.

“‘Whose is this?’

“To which the angel replied, ‘Your former neighbour’s, old James. You remember him?’

“‘Whose is that immense plot?’

“‘Lord A.’s. Have you forgotten him?’

“‘What? Is there the same difference in Heaven between the rich and the poor? I thought it would be all set right there.’

“‘There is no difference between rich and poor, as you count riches and poverty; but there is a great difference between him that loved much, and him that loved little; between those that laid up treasures in Heaven, and those that did not.’

“The dreamer was silent, until the angel pointed out a still larger garden of exquisite beauty, and said,—

“‘Do you know who that is who is labouring there?’

“‘I thought no one laboured in Heaven.’

“‘No one is weary there, but all work for God. But do you not remember that woman?’

“‘I don’t know. She is very much changed if it is; but she is very like old Sarah, who lived on parish allowance at the end of our lane.’

“‘It is she ; and she gave her mite every week. Behold her reward. I have seen her work late at making something in order to earn a penny ; and no one knew what she did with it.’

“‘I have seen enough,’ said the dreamer in a sad voice, and he woke up from his sleep.”

Lucy finished her tale, and her father and she rose up and departed ; leaving the man to think the thing over. As they walked home the vicar said, “Lucy, whatever they say I will never rob the poor man of his means of laying up treasure in Heaven.”

Want of Faith.

THERE was an old couple in England who had worked hard all their days, and never got on. They were no nearer riches, nor even competency, than when they began life together. They had tried one plan after another, and nothing succeeded. They were soured by disappointment, not made wiser ; and were a torment to others and themselves as well.

One day a letter came from a long-missing relative in a far country. They read it with difficulty, but, the more they read, the more astonished and overjoyed were they at the contents. The letter stated that the writer had boundless wealth, more a great deal than he wanted for himself ; and that his chief happiness was in dispersing it, and making others happy ; but he liked to have his friends near him, and that those who wished to enjoy his favours must come to him. It was true that they must travel, and that the voyage

might perhaps be rough, but it would not last long ; and then those who took it would rejoice ever after that they had done so.

The letter went on to state that the writer had built a house for his relatives, which was all that heart could desire ; that it was very beautiful, and abounded in comforts and luxuries. It was theirs even then, assigned to them, made their very own. All they had to do was to come and take possession, and that he would shortly tell them when they were to remove to it.

The old people devoured this good news at first, and spoke much of it to their neighbours ; but by degrees they grew less and less happy.

First, they began to think they should not like after all to leave the old country ; and then, to think how they were to pay the expenses of the journey, and how they were to live till the summons came for them to start.

Thus they fell into a dissatisfied and desponding temper, and seemed no happier for the good news than they were before they received it.

Whilst they were in this state of mind, a good man came in one day, and had a long talk with them, during which he drew out little by little all their fears

and dissatisfactions. Having done this, he asked them,—

“Are you satisfied here? Have you enough to live on now? Are you happy as you are?”

They could not say yes to these questions.

Then he added, “It is clearly best for you to go, and the only difficulty remaining, is that you are afraid you may not have enough to live on until you remove and for your journey. Is it not so?”

They replied that it was; then he said, “Was your friend likely to forget this? Was he a thoughtless improvident person who would not remember this difficulty.”

And they could but reply, “No, he was not.”

Then he added, “Do you not think, then, that all this is very ungrateful to your benefactor? Is it likely that he would prepare a house for you, and abundance; and not keep you until you go, and enable you to reach it? Pray do not let him know of your fears, for they imply distrust; and nothing hurts a friend more than this. He might justly think you very ungrateful. Am I not right?”

They could not deny this, and resolved to be patient.

In a few days they received supplies for the present, and after a time a summons to go.

They found the voyage easy, and reached their new home, where they dwell with their benefactor in happiness. He had heard of their fears, but he did not reproach them. On the contrary, he received them and still sustains them with the most tender affection.

Loss of Taste.

THERE was one who enjoyed life to the full, in fact rather too much. He had made pleasure his object, and pursued it as far as he could. At last he grew old and fell ill, and one sign of danger was entire loss of appetite.

One day a friend brought him the most beautiful fruits. He tried to look at them, but his eyes were dim, and he could not see how lovely were the bunches of grapes laid on the green vine leaves. Then he ate one, shook his head, and said, "I cannot taste it."

Another day one of his children brought him the loveliest flowers, those of which he used to be specially fond. He took them feebly, and tried to smell them, but he laid them down, sighing. They had no scent for him.

They made savoury dishes such as he used to

delight in, and brought the wine that he loved, but he thrust them away with disgust.

One day his daughter sang to him the old songs which he once listened to hour by hour, and could not have enough of them ; but he was restless all the time she was singing, and at last begged her to cease. Life had lost all its pleasures, for he had lost all power to feel them.

He would not hear of business, nor sports, nor politics, nor the events of the neighbourhood ; and none of his old books could be read to him.

So he lay day after day in a dull heavy state, sometimes sleeping, sometimes moaning, sometimes turning round restlessly, and he gradually grew weaker and weaker.

They knew that he thought and felt all the time, for he groaned frequently, and tears would gather in his eyes and roll down ; but he said little or nothing.

At last an aged man came and prayed with him, and read to him from a book which he used to think nothing of, and which lay year after year on the shelf ; and he listened attentively. He grew calmer, but there was no increase of appetite. He took nothing.

One day the same person came again clad in white, and bringing some food on a bright silver plate, and

some wine in a shining cup placed beside it. He said, "My brother, this food comes to thee from a far land, sent on purpose."

The sick man signed his assent, and partook of the wondrous refreshment.

Afterwards he said, "I can taste that. That is sweet. I will have nothing else. I care for nothing but this."

Then he fell asleep softly, and awoke no more.

The Lone Swallow.

ALL the swallows gathered on the roof of the church and talked over the time for leaving. All but one agreed that it was near. Then they took a happy sweep round the churchyard, over the village, back again to the ridge tile of the church roof, where they rested and sunned themselves, and talked of the long voyage before them, and the happy sunny land where they should winter.

Only one took no part in all this stir. When asked why he was silent, he replied,—

“It is very comfortable here. Sunny days go on, and the wind is soft. Why should we go? I am very happy. I shall not go. Stay with me.”

But the wise birds who commanded the flying squadron answered,—

“Suns are bright, but clouds are gloomy. South-west breezes are soft, but North winds are hard and

cold. Food is sweet, but hunger bitter. Summer is joyous, but not winter. Strange lands are good to sojourn in, but home is far safer and far dearer. We know to-day, but not to-morrow. Come with us. Let us go home together. Come."

But this one swallow would not go. He clung to the land of his sojourning, and cared not for his native country ; so he stayed. The others left him, flight by flight, and he sat on the church roof by himself.

He soon felt lonely, and spoke to the jackdaws in the tower, but they did not care for him, and answered not. Then he tried the rooks, the starlings, and the sparrows. Some replied, but many did not. Those, however, that spoke, used a different language, and had different habits. There was nothing in common between them, except that they were birds ; and the lingering swallow felt very desolate.

"All are gone," he said, "and I am left alone. What do I here ? The sweetness of life has departed. The sun shines less. The winds are growing sharp, and I am wretched."

And as the season advanced the swallow's limbs grew stiff and his eyes less keen, and his motions became slower and slower. Men gazed at him, as he sat on the roof, and the birds wondered.

“Why is he here so long?” they said. “It must be very sad for him. Why is he here?”

“Ah! why indeed?” replied the swallow to himself. “Why am I here?”

One day, however, to his surprise and joy, he saw three swallows light upon the church. He hastened to them, and found that two had stayed with one which was too weak to fly, and that they were going to try and cross the sea, if possible. The lonely swallow told them his sad tale; and they did not reproach him, but asked him to join them on their homeward voyage. He gratefully accepted the offer, and for their sakes, not for his, the winds held back their might, and the clouds rolled up their trailing vestments, and there was an unusually bright Martinmas, during which the little company pushed on with all their strength, and at last crossed the Straits at Gibraltar, and reached their native country. Nor was the laggard swallow blamed, but welcomed most kindly; and he lived, without any more wanderings, in the happy sunny land of his home.

Follow Your Nose.

THESE were the directions given to a boy by his Uncle. Now, this boy had an opinion of his own, and a turn for argument. So he said to himself, "Why should I follow my nose? Is it because I cannot help it? We will soon see about that. Where there's a will there's a way. Is it because my nose is a sensible guide, and the ruling part of my self? It is not. It is an inferior member. It has no mind. I could do just as well without it, because for one nice smell I have through it I have ten nasty ones. I will not follow my nose. My nose shall follow me. My Uncle's a fool." So saying, the boy walked backwards, and his nose followed him; and he walked into a dunghill, and his nose was the only part of him that was not bemired and befouled; and his uncle was delighted on hearing of his nephew's misfortune, because he was really fond of him, and wished him well.

Be Yourself.

THERE was a young cock who was learning to crow, and he did not get on fast, but was improving, and would soon have done very well ; but one day he said to the old hen, "I don't think I will go on crowing any longer. I heard a bird in the garden, who sang very well, and I shall try and copy it."

"Nonsense," said the hen ; "be yourself, child ; and don't try to do what you can't do. Be yourself without your faults. That is the rule."

However, the young cock would not be persuaded, and he first tried to copy the lark, and all the fowls laughed at him ; then the thrush, and they laughed also. Then he took it into his head to imitate a nightingale. You should have heard him. It was a real joke. Unfortunately, the farmer did not think so. He got tired of the screeches of the silly bird under his window, and had him killed, and sent to market without any pity.

The Voice at Night.

AT the mouth of a creek which opened into that of a western Italian river, Marco, a fisherman, was hauling in his net on a bright autumn evening. Some miles above him, the city glowed in the setting sun, and the masts of the ships stood out sharp and clear against the light. The river was steeped in ruby or golden light, and all the little runlets and pools of the stream shone in the sunset. There was no sound to be heard, except the cries of the wild fowl on the marshes, or the whistling of the air when a flight cleft it like a rocket ; and the ripple of the quiet stream under the bows of the boat. Marco was at one end of the boat and his boy at the other. They were getting in the net, and shaking it as they did so, so that the captives might fall into the pockets of the net as, freed from weed and rubbish, it was drawn in foot by foot. Then came the last haul, and the

bottom of the net with the fish slipped over the gunwale, and fell to the bottom of the boat. This done, the father and the boy began sorting, throwing the worthless fish overboard, and tossing the good into a basket. There was more weed and shell in the net than usual, and the sorting was a work of time. It seemed doubtful whether the light would last for them to complete their work.

Whilst Marco was thus engaged his eye fell upon a strange object. He took it up and gazed at it with astonishment. It was a golden ring with a large jewel set in it. Whether it was a diamond or ruby he could not tell in that red light of the sunset, but it was either the one or the other. Marco looked to see if his boy observed him, and seeing that he did not, at once concealed the treasure in his pocket.

Scarcely had he accomplished this, when he was aware of a large boat close upon him. His own boat had drifted to the bottom of the creek unperceived, and up the river had come a handsome barge pulled by twenty men. They almost ran into Marco's boat, before he knew that they were near. In the stern sat a stately man, whom Marco recognized in a moment, and turned pale as ashes. It was the Duke, whose face was equally pale. But neither knew the other's

pallor in that ruddy light, any more than they could read each other's minds. The ducal barge went rapidly up. Marco replaced his hat upon his head, drew a long breath, and sat in silence.

At last his son aroused him by inquiring whether they had not better row home, as it was getting late. The father assented. Each took an oar. They pulled a mile or two, grounded their boat on the soft river-side, made all snug for the night, and began to walk home with their basket of fish.

All this time Marco said little or nothing, and the boy could not conceive the reason. It was the same when they reached home. Marco scarcely spoke during supper, and his wife could not make out what was amiss, for he was a light-hearted man generally, and fond of talking. It was his way to recount at home all the little adventures of the day; its successes and failures. The sunshine of the house had been the openness of all its ways. Every joy had been shared by parents and child, and the evening was always passed in cheerful conversation, enlivened by many a joke. The silence, therefore, and gloom on the night in question was all the more striking. As soon as supper was over, Marco lighted the lamp, and carried it into an outhouse, where he pulled out the ring and

began to examine it. As he did so, the remembrance of a sad tale came over him, how that the Duke's elder brother had some years ago disappeared suddenly, and how that he was known to have worn a ruby ring of immense value, the gift of the old Duchess, his grandmother.

The more he thought it over, the more Marco became convinced that this was the very ring. If so, it was the Duke's. Should he take it to him? Take it to him, and get a few pieces of gold, perhaps; whereas the ring was a fortune in itself, if he could but dispose of it securely! When Marco returned to bed at night he lay sleepless, still thinking what to do. His wife had tried in vain to make him talk, and thinking that he was asleep, she gave up the attempt, and at last fell asleep herself. Then Marco also slept.

As he did so, he seemed in his sleep to see a figure standing over him, but it was indistinct. It had no outlines, still less features by which it could be recognized, but its speech was clear enough. It seemed to say, "Restore the ring" in so loud and clear a voice that Marco started up, thinking that his wife must have heard the words, but she was sleeping peacefully. This Marco could not do. He lay quiet, however, until morn, thinking and struggling with himself.

Should he obey the voice and give up the ring? If he did not, some terrible judgment might befall him. If he did, what profit was it to have made so great a discovery?

Next day Marco's wife noticed how worn and anxious her husband looked, and tried to find out the cause, but in vain. He went to his work moodily, and took the boy with him, and all went on as usual; but whilst his net was down he heard the sound of oars, and the ducal barge drew near, rowing down the river.

Marco did not know that there were some foreign galleys lying lower down, which the Duke was visiting, and he was afraid. Again he became deadly pale, and the Duke was also pale. By him sat a lovely girl, his only child, who looked very ill; and her father seemed sometimes to watch her features anxiously, and sometimes to look with terror at the opposite side of the river, and then turn from it as if with determination to look no more.

Little did the Duke know Marco's secret—the ring and the voice; and little did Marco know that by the Duke's bed, the night before, had stood that same form—had sounded that terrible voice, “Restore.”

Marco had now made up his mind what to do, which

was to leave the Dukedom and go to Genoa, and there secretly dispose of the jewel, and then retire and live upon the proceeds. But how to do this was another question. What reason could he give to his neighbours for such a step? What to his wife? The strangeness and folly of the action would arouse suspicions. So another day passed in thinking, and then came, another night, the same figure, and the same summons, "Restore," and it was in the ducal palace as in the fisherman's cottage.

A third day came. In vain Marco's wife entreated him to tell her what was on his mind. He would not. He was determined not to give up the ring, and only doubtful how to make use of it securely.

Night came again, and with it the figure, and the voice; but there was an addition to the summons. "Restore. This is the last time."

And so it was also in the palace.

Day came slowly, very slowly, Marco could eat no breakfast. He was feverish, irritable, restless. He went down to his boat, and the boy with him, and the net was being put overboard, when the boy slipped and fell with it entangled in its folds. His father tried to haul him up in the net, but in his terror the line ran through his fingers. The boy bound hand and

foot in the net could do nothing, and the confused lump went down into four fathoms of water. There was a gurgling and bubbling, and then all was quiet, and the tide rippled peacefully over the place where Marco's boy lay drowned.

The poor man was distracted, and was about to leap into the water, when another fisherman came up, who soon perceived what had happened, and how impossible it was to help. All that he could do, he did ; he took Marco home, and broke the sad news as best he might to the mother.

Her grief was very bitter, but not like that of Marco. He had no comfort at all. She believed that her son was in rest and peace, and prayed for resignation. Marco could not pray. He had never prayed since he made up his mind to keep the ring, though he knelt down in order to deceive his wife. He knew that the boy's death lay at his door—and that he was in a manner his son's murderer.

With much trouble the neighbours swept the bottom of the creek, and at last recovered the body of the boy. It was carried home, and his mother wept upon her child. Then came the funeral, and the silence and loneliness which succeed ; and the dead oppressive benumbing habitual grief, so much more

hard to bear than the first paroxysm. In all this the mother had her consolations, and she found peace on her knees by the little bed where her boy had slept, and in church, and a most joyful sorrow at the grave, as she hung fresh garlands on the little cross. But Marco sat on in a stupor of misery. People thought he would either go mad or die ; when a sudden change came over him. He heard something said about the Duke, and listening, found that the Duke's daughter had fallen from a balcony and was dead ; and on inquiring, he learned also that this sad event, which had filled all the country with grief, happened on the same day that he had lost his son.

Marco began to think deeply, and the more he thought, the more strange did all this appear to him. It became clearer to him that the ring belonged to the Duke's lost brother, and clear that Heaven had visited his own dishonesty on him. Perhaps the finding of the ring might be the finding of some secret, and yield the Duke some comfort. At any rate, he would try. So with a great effort he told his wife the whole sad tale of his vision, and having dressed himself for so great an occasion, he took the ring and proceeded to the city and the palace.

When Marco reached the doors of the palace he

sought in vain to obtain admission. The Duke had seen no one since his loss. Marco was rudely rejected by the attendants, but he still stood there waiting, and at last an old man came out, who seemed to be much respected by the servants. Marco addressed him and asked to see the Duke. He was told kindly by the old man that his wish was vain, but that he himself would take a message if the matter was really of importance.

Marco took out the ring, and gave it, saying, "Please to tell the Duke that I found this in my net at the mouth of a creek, five miles down the river."

The old man told the servants to give Marco a seat at the gate, and bade him wait there for his return, and went in.

Marco waited two hours in expectation. At last he was summoned into the Duke's presence. The Duke was alone, and looked haggard and ill. His eyes were fixed on the ground, as he inquired how and where Marco found the ring, and, when he heard the tale, he asked whether anything else was discovered at the same time.

Marco replied, "Only an old piece of armour which I threw back into the water."

The Duke started. After a pause, the Duke took

out a heavy purse, and counting out fifty golden pieces offered them to the fisherman, desiring him not to breathe a word about the business to any one, or he would find it would be the worse for him.

Marco refused the gold. He had had enough of the business, and the more he saw of it, the less he liked it. The Duke was very angry, and repeated his warning to be silent with a curse.

As Marco left the palace, the old nobleman who met him at first, stopped him, inquired what had passed, and Marco's name and residence, and then saw him through the gates.

Not many days after this, whilst Marco was fishing he observed a boat coming towards him, in which was the old nobleman, with two other grave and elderly persons, rowed by four men.

As they drew near, the old nobleman called Marco, and told him to show them the exact spot where the ring was found. He did so, and he then saw them begin working backwards and forwards with an iron net, weighted heavily in the beam; a sort of dredge, only very large.

As they did this, Marco observed that they took things out of the net from time to time, laid them carefully in their boat, and then resumed their work

until dark ; when they ceased, pulled up the river, and disappeared.

Not long after this, the news reached Marco's village that the Duke had suddenly disappeared, no one knew whither, and that inquiry was being made by the nobles, concerning a son of his elder brother, supposed to have been born and brought up secretly. The next news was that the boy was proved to be the lawful son of the elder brother, by a secret marriage ; and the story, gradually assuming more distinctness and completeness, ran thus, that the heir to the dukedom had married a peasant's fair daughter privately, and had never dared to tell his father what he had done, nor even to inform his simple wife who he was ; that, somehow or other, the younger brother found out his secret, and insisted on seeing his beautiful sister-in-law. The elder brother objected for a long time, but at last consented. They went together disguised as men-at-arms, and on their return, the devilish temptation came with the opportunity : one push was enough. The elder brother fell over the boat-side, sank in his armour, and the whole story remained a secret.

At last the discovery of the ring alarmed the Duke, and set the friends of the deceased on the alert. Whilst they were searching for the dead, he was fool

enough, with that folly which crime so often inspires, to disguise himself and go to the village where his sister-in-law dwelt, to see whether the boy still lived. He was followed and watched, and gradually the evidence against him, and in favour of his nephew, grew conclusive.

In this state of things, the old nobleman already mentioned, who loved the murdered brother, but was loyal to the whole house, and wished to save it from disgrace, informed the false Duke how things stood, and gave him means to fly.

Such was the tale. At any rate the uncle was gone, gone for ever, no trace of him appeared from the day he vanished ; and a fine lad was acknowledged to be his brother's son, and recognized as Duke.

Marco had now suffered his punishment. It was not so heavy as that of the murderer. He adopted a little nephew, who became almost as dear to his wife and himself, as their lost child ; and he lived humbly and peacefully to a good old age.

That strange form and voice were no more seen nor heard ; but, when the sun set upon the river, and his boat was like a spot in a flood of gold, the memory of the former scenes would come over him ; and a

bubble in the net appeared like a ring of gold ; and his nephew seemed like his own dear boy ; and often and often he warned the lad, whilst they were fishing, of the danger of covetousness ; and begged him to listen to the voice of duty, calling on him in the stillness to do righteously, if he wished for peace of mind ; and when the lad asked for the oft-repeated story, Marco told it to him, taking all shame to himself, as his nephew listened breathlessly to the tale.

So the old man lived and worked ; then died, and rests ; and nothing of all that has been described remains, except the city, and the river, and the antique ruby ring preserved in a cabinet in the museum.

The Flies and the Horses.

A FOUR-HORSE coach was toiling up a steep, North Devon hill, on its way to the nearest railway station, when the following conversation took place between the flies which hovered over the leaders; and when certain remarks were made by the flies to the horses, and by the horses upon the flies.

First fly to second: "They will never be in time. Lazy rascals! I will take care they shall hear of it."

Second fly: "That stupid old coachman! I have no patience with him. Why doesn't he drive as we do? We drive the public, and the public drives the Government, and the Church, and everything in the country."

Third fly: "You talk very big; but my grandfather, who was not larger, when unfolded, than

one side of the 'Times,' drove the great Napoleon half mad, and made him resolve to invade England, and collect an army and fleet for that purpose."

Fourth fly: "Your grandfather! Why, mine fetched the Duke of Wellington out of his lines behind Torres Vedras. There he lay doing nothing, and getting fat, till our paper made him come out and fight like a man."

First fly: "Pshaw! The Duke did not care for flies. He was one of the very few men who do not."

Second fly: "My father was the death of Lord Raglan."

Third fly: "What's that to us? We tell Government what its budget is to be."

Fourth fly: "I can put you up to a thing. The way is to find out what Government is going to do, and then to insist upon it; to feel the pulse of the country, and when you know what it wishes and means, recommend it. So you get all the credit for wisdom."

First fly: "We all know that very well; but see, we don't get on a bit. The coach will be late. Their leaders are nothing to ours."

Whereat the other flies laughed.

Coachman: "Plague on the flies; how they tease

my poor cattle to-day. Would you believe it, sir? They fly as fast as I drive. Wherever we are along the road there they are too."

Off leader: "Do you hear those flies?"

Near leader: "They're only flies, and ours is a coach. Let 'em buzz."

Horselaugh.

First fly: "Hold up there. You'd 'a been down, you off leader, if I hadn't held you up."

Second fly: "We shall be in time after all."

Third fly: "They would not have been but for me. I will have them exposed. I will come down on them."

Near leader: "I wish they had not cut my tail. What a plague those flies are."

Off leader: "Never mind 'em. There's a storm coming. That'll cool 'em, I reckon."

First fly: "Is there? Then I'll be off at once."

Second fly: "I won't. I'll stick to him."

The rain falls in large drops. Two flies go, two are knocked down into the road, and the wheel goes over them. Another horselaugh, and the coach drives up at a canter, and arrives at the station five minutes before the train is due, and twenty minutes before it appears. A fifth fly, who had been

silent, and stuck to the collar, went up to town by the train, and then said it was all owing to him that the coach was in time, whereas a sixth said, "He knew it would be all along, and always said that it would."

Belief.

THERE was a shoemaker who read a good deal, and talked a good deal more, until he became the oracle of the village. He had a good many theories, as, for example, that there ought to be no hills, and no trees higher than gooseberry bushes, and no farms larger than an acre, and no army or navy.

At one time he took Equality and Fraternity for his motto, and printed them at the top of his bills, but he gave them up because he saved some money and bought his own shop; and, when one of his neighbours out of fun, suggested that he should take a drunken and squalid neighbour into partnership as his brother and equal, he had to shift his ground, and confess that it was absurd to put an idle man on a level with an industrious one, or a fool with a clever fellow. In fact, as the shoemaker got on, he looked contemptuously on those beneath him, and kept them

at a distance. In fact, he became a strong Conservative of all he had won, and directly he acquired a vote he became a decided enemy of universal suffrage. Still he liked to be thought liberal, and was as fond of talking as ever ; so he took to religious subjects as he left off political matters ; and one of his favourite doctrines on which he delighted to argue, was a man's right to believe what he likes, and that a man's character does not depend upon his faith. So he was for education without religion.

It was all in vain that a sensible old veteran used to sit in his shop, and try to convince him that a man's conduct will always depend on what he believes, and that murder and stealing, and the like, would become common unless the world believed them to be wrong. All this warning was lost on the shoemaker, and he was doomed to be convinced in a manner which was very far from agreeable.

The event came about thus. The shoemaker had a son, who lived with him, and worked in his shop. The lad was very unlike his talkative father, and was both silent and heavy. His father thought him a dolt, but the lad had ears, and picked up his father's doctrines, and was ready to practise them. In fact, he was very far from being a fool.

One day father and son went out into the country for a holiday, and as they were returning, they got into the middle of a large field before they perceived a bull grazing there. The bull, however, saw them, and made straight at the strangers. They ran for the stile, and the boy, being the best runner, got over in safety, in time to see his father caught by the bull, and sent flying into the air. The boy watched this process in silence, and the bull was about to repeat the operation on his father, when, fortunately, a haymaker saw what was going on, and by a judicious use of his hayfork in the bull's flanks, diverted his thoughts from the agreeable pastime in which he was occupied ; and the old man was saved.

On the way home the father said nothing, but, once arrived there, he caught hold of a stick in one hand and of his son in the other, and cried out,—

“Now, sir. I'll teach you what it is to leave your father to a bull to be gored. Why, if it had been a stranger, you might have had some excuse ; but to leave your own father to be killed, you undutiful, heartless, young scoundrel, I'll give it you.”

“I didn't,” said the lad.

“Didn't. What do you mean ?”

“I didn't leave my father to be gored.”

“Not leave your father? Didn't you leave me?”

“But you're not my father.”

“Not your father?”

“No. I don't believe you are.”

“What! You have the face to say that.”

“I can't help it, if I don't believe it. You have always said a man is not to blame for what he believes, or does not believe. Haven't you now?”

The shoemaker was in a paroxysm of rage.

“I'll show you I'm your father, my fine fellow. I'll give you a taste of a father's stick.”

“I don't see as that proves a man a father, to thrash his son. I should ha' thought a father would have pitied his son,” said the lad, wriggling out of his father's clutch. “You want to punish me for my opinions. I can't believe what I can't. I don't believe you are my father, that I don't.”

“Then I need not keep you, and won't,” said the old man, kicking the lad out of the house.

But by this time a crowd had collected, and the neighbours would know what had happened; and when he got his breath, the shoemaker, though very unwillingly, told them, on which one slyly remarked, “Why, John! You are persecuting a poor fellow for his opinions.”

"Come here, Tom," said the veteran, to the lad kindly. "You're in the wrong, though you are a sharper fellow than I took you for. Go and tell your father you're sorry, and that you only talked all this nonsense to save your back."

Tom grinned, and apologized. The old man was propitiated and received him again, and all went on as before, except that the shoemaker never afterwards argued that a man's conduct does not depend on his faith, nor that he is free to believe what he likes.

Moreover, he had a higher opinion of Tom ever afterwards, though, sad to say, Tom did not deserve it, for he was a selfish fellow, and did not believe anything that he did not like.

The Arm Chair.

A MAN saved money, and desired to make himself comfortable with the fruit of his labours. Accordingly, he bought several things, and, amongst others, a really easy chair. We will not describe it lest others should be tempted to get one made like it. Suffice it to say that it was the very perfection of comfort. The moment you took your place in it a sweet irresistible softness stole over you ; not sleep, for you still spoke and enjoyed what was going on, but a delicious languor, which, like an opiate, made the happy sitter supremely indifferent to all that went on around him. — Even the troubles of life were an enjoyment to the occupant, because, thus embosomed in comfort, he felt them not.

Well, the man bought the chair, and sat down in it, and having sat down, he had no inclination to rise. A neighbour came running in, and said, “Have you

heard? The enemy have landed and are marching on this place, and you are captain in the Volunteers. Up and be doing."

"Take it more quietly, my friend," was the answer. "You should not believe every rumour. Buy a chair like mine, and be happy."

Shortly after another came in, and said, "They have burnt the villages and gone on. The people are starving and homeless."

"I am very sorry," said the man. "Take a seat. Have a pipe. Just ring the bell for me."

But his neighbour rushed out indignant.

By-and-bye one of the servants came in, and said, "Please, sir, the vicar wants to see you."

"Tell him," was the reply, "I cannot be interrupted."

After a time he was seized with a sharp pain, and sent for the doctor, who came and told him he must live on biscuit and water, and take strong exercise.

"Give him a guinea," said the man to his servant, and remained sitting.

Presently, a skeleton came in, and said, "Come with me," and though the comfortable man pretended that he could not bear moving, he took him bodily out of his chair, and carried him off, nor was he seen any more.

The Battle of the Insects and the Birds.

THERE was a public meeting of the insects to organize a resistance to the birds, and a list was formed of their available forces. Unfortunately, the most warlike among them, the hornets and wasps, were excluded, because it was clearly proved that they also preyed upon insects. The bees, however, were applied to, and a million swarms met in council. All the old women were tinkling their pots and tea-trays in distraction. They could not think what was the matter, but the bees paid no heed to them. They went on deliberating until they had made up their mind, and appointed a deputy to attend the general meeting of insects. This meeting was held, and the deputy of the bees made the following speech :—

“Fellow countrymen,—I regret to inform you that

my brethren have decided, with the assent of their queens, to decline taking any part in this war. It is not only that war would stop our manufactures, which are the source of our greatness, but that we think the whole proceeding unwise. It is not as if you had been lately subdued and were trying to regain your freedom, but the condition of which you complain has existed from the beginning. It appears to us that horses might as well rebel against men ; not to speak of bullocks, and sheep, and poultry, and other creatures on which men feast, but we also, whose honey they steal. Nay, men might as well conspire against old age and death. The evils which we suffer are part of the order of things, and their remedy is endurance. Moreover, good comes out of evil. Were it not for some of the birds, we ourselves should be injured by insects ; and I put it to you whether there would be enough herbage to live on, unless the birds reduced the number of caterpillars. On the whole, we have resolved to keep quiet, and advise the same course to our brethren."

This address was received with loud hisses, and a provisional government was appointed to raise an army for the extirpation of birds ; birds of prey being excepted, although inconsistently.

Accordingly, butterflies were formed into regiments, because of their ready-made uniform. Grasshoppers were the cavalry, Rose-beetles were the rifles in green, Humming-bird moths were the Uhlans, Drones were trumpeters, Beetles and Cockchafers were the artillery, Spiders acted as engineers ; and the army fully equipped, at once opened the campaign.

And now, not only the old women, but all the world was astonished. It seemed as if the air had gone mad. Such a buzzing and whizzing, such a cloud of combatants, such multitudes of ambulance ants slyly carrying off the wounded and dead to their nests.

At last the battle was over. The birds, weary but joyful, sat on the trees or the houses celebrating their glorious victory. The ground was covered with wings and legs and the bodies of the dead heroes ; and a great silence settled down on the country. At last a swallow remarked, "This has been a bad business for all. We have killed too many flies, and what we and the fly-catchers are going to live on is not very clear."

This was true. A famine ensued, and it was not for some time that things came round again, and settled down to their former condition, since which the insects have wisely yielded to fate, live as long

as they can and as happily ; and if they perish by birds, why then they do not die of typhus or cholera, which is a comfort to them ; together with the fact that they have no expenses from cemeteries, funerals, wills, and lawsuits. In fact, they are no worse off than the lords of creation, as vain-glorious men are accustomed to call themselves.

Bad Feeling on Board.

“**T**HERE now,” said the five hundred horse-power engine, “if they have not been and put a donkey engine on deck! The little ass! It is quite a disgrace to the family. It is not as if she was a young one and would grow bigger. I wonder what will come next.”

“What of that?” replied the donkey engine. “I do all the heavy work on deck, get up the anchor, get the cargo in and out of the hold; and I don’t eat and drink half what you do; half! no not a hundredth part.”

“Hear those fellows,” said the mainsail to the top-sail. “They’ll ruin the service. My grandfather always said they would. They’re so puffed up and vapouring; and they eat—bless you, I would sooner keep one of them for a week than a fortnight.”

“Listen to them,” said the ship. “Here am I

labouring and straining, with my ribs nearly broken, and my back too ; and a pain in the waist, and such a load in my hold, and they only think of themselves."

By this time the coal ran short, and the engines were put on half allowance, and the donkey engine on none.

"Good job, about that young ass at any rate," said the great engines.

Then the topsail was carried away out of the bolt ropes, and the mainsail split.

"Good job too," said the engines, "but we are very hungry. I wonder they don't think of us."

Then all the deck cargo was hove over, guns, and donkey engine.

"Good riddance," said the ship, and the engines.

Then the engine-room was flooded by a sea, and the furnace put out, when the ship foundered ; and what the engines said to the ship, or the ship to the engines down below, was never reported ; but it is supposed that each lays the blame on the other still ; but this does not seem to help them, for they have not been seen since they went down.

The Rough Diamond.

“COME here, Dick,” said a man to his nephew, who was swaggering about, “and I will tell you a story.

“A certain jeweller saw his son turning a man away who had come to offer a diamond for sale. ‘Let me look at it,’ said the jeweller. He did so, and bought it, saying afterwards to his son, ‘Don’t you know a rough diamond when you see one?’

“Shortly after this another man entered the shop and offered two diamonds, as he said, for sale. They also were rough-looking, and the son brought them eagerly to his father, expecting him to purchase them; but the old jeweller, after looking at them, begged the man to sit down, saying he would shortly return. When he did so, he came with a policeman, to whom he gave the stranger in charge, dryly remarking, ‘There is all the difference in the world between a rough diamond, and a piece of glass roughened to look like one.’ That is all, my lad.”

The Rag and Bone Man.

I MET the rag and bone man in a lane. He had been to the public-house, and for once was communicative. Generally he keeps out of the way, and evidently does not wish me to know what he has in his barrow.

This time, however, he was very genial and communicative, and offered to show me his load. I gladly accepted the offer, and saw there my neighbour's cold leg of mutton, sold by the cook, and pudding ends, and carpet ends, and no end of things which ought not to have been sold. Amongst them, to my regret, I saw that poor people had sold old clothes, and pieces of stuff, which would have been worth far more to them for mending than what they got from the rag and bone man. I noticed some boots not worn out by any means, and inquired what would be done with them.

"Well," the man said, "some'll be altered, and

some'll be put by till the fashion comes round again. Round toes'll be in again in ten years. That's about the time it takes to come in again, and it's as sure as the sun."

Presently, I saw a large bottle and asked what was in it.

"Them's the waste words, sir," he replied, "what are thrown away."

"But these are not all the waste words in my village; surely."

"Bless you, sir! not a thousandth part; but some's so bad they won't keep, and there is no great sale for the article."

"I wonder there is any sale at all."

"Well, sir, I sells some to members of parliament, and there is a company got up for working they things up into wind for what they calls the calm latitude. A curious place that, sir, where they wants such things."

"And what is this?" I said, taking up a tangled lump.

"That's waste time, sir."

"Waste time! and what is done with it?"

"It was spun by the Fates, as they call 'em, then it's wove, sir, and made into winding-sheets."

Then there was a great confused lump at the bottom of the barrow ; and the man took up bits, and explained them.

“Them’s waste opportunities, sir ; throwed clean away. I can’t do anything with them, but I takes ’em away just to please the people, who are ashamed to see ’em lying about. They won’t keep long. And this here is waste knowledge, which I’m going to try and sell to a cheap school. You see, sir, Mr. A. and the Misses had a fine education, Latin and Greek, and I don’t know what, more nor ever they uses, and so it was throwed away, and I picked it up. Then these is what people calls talents, gifts, ’bilities like, and I am going to take ’em down to Colney Hatch to see whether they can use ’em for the poor folks there ; but, I don’t see how they’s to get ’em into their heads, and, like enough, the goods will be on my hands.”

“And how much, my friend, do you waste on beer ?” I said, sick at heart. “Beer, sir ! Why, sir, all the brewers’ vats wouldn’t hold it. I once had a cart and horse, and I drank ’em all up, harness and all.”

However, I felt that the man had got some of my own wasted things in his barrow, and so I said no more, and wished him good morning.

The Glossometre.

A GENTLEMAN lived a few miles out of a town to which he always resorted on market days. He had often disputed with his neighbours as to how far he could walk, and he used to add up the miles in and out of the town, and time himself; and hold up his watch in triumph when he met his adversary in the road.

One day, however, he saw a pedometre and resolved to buy it, but he forgot, and accordingly sent for it by the carrier. It came, and without looking at it carefully, he put it in his pocket the very next time he went to market. He just set it, and that was all.

That day was a great day in the little town, a fair as well as market, and the gentleman forgot all about his instrument, though it never forgot him. He went home and sat down to dinner with a few selected friends, ate and drank heartily, and after

dinner handed his purchase to the next person to look at.

As soon as his friend saw the instrument, he exclaimed, "Why, this is not a pedometre, but a glossometre."

"A glossometre!" cried the host. "What in the world is that?"

"Why, it registers all one's words," said his friend.

"Give it to me," said the host, eagerly.

"No, no!" cried the guests. "Open it. Read it."

In vain the owner protested. It was opened and read aloud, amid roars of laughter.

"Time, four hours.

"Words, 100,000.

"Subjects.

"Observations on the weather, 100; on the crops, 50; to his own praise, 100; to his neighbour's blame, 200; faults found with others, which are also his own, 199."

Shouts of laughter succeeded each remark of the faithful companion. But in truth it was past a joke.

Next day the host left for London. Shortly afterwards, his house and goods were put up and sold, and he disappeared entirely from that part of the country,

but it was very observable that not one of the guests ventured to keep the glossometre.

Not a purchaser could be found for it at the sale. The instrument lay kicking about, until the clerk found it, and placed it one day in the pulpit. It was soon turned out thence. The clerk's wife would not so much as touch it ; and no one now knows what is become of it ; yet, assuredly, it was an instrument deserving of general use. So far from this, however, the inventor was fairly driven out of the town, which is the more to be regretted as he was meditating a moral thermometer, self-registering, to tell people how hot they had been in argument, and inform young folks of the state of their affections ; also a moral barometer to warn husbands when to look out for squalls. However, he was said to be a designing fellow, and people were beyond measure enraged at his metres. So he departed to a very distant and strange land, where the inhabitants are said to wish honestly to fulfil the old precept, "Know thyself," and where they are said to leave the character and affairs of their neighbours alone for this purpose. It is probable that this is but a traveller's tale, and that no such nation exists in this world.

The Maker and His Work.

THERE was a wondrous inventor and maker of machinery by which the whole country greatly benefited. In fact, all its prosperity, nay, its very subsistence, sprang from the products of his skill.

In the city there was a museum in which his extraordinary mechanism was exhibited, and, in company with many others, I went to see it. In the centre of the room there was a table on which was placed a book containing an account of the objects of each work, but not of the mechanism itself; and at the end of the room there was a private door with a gong hung up near it, on which any person might strike who wished to see the great author of all the works.

I saw many people pass along stupidly gazing with an ignorant wonder; many laughing and talking of the follies of the day, as if there was nothing to admire, and nothing more handsome than themselves,

or more interesting than the latest fashion. Others, however, discoursed one with another, and some lectured the crowd on the wonders which they saw ; and gave their opinions, after minute examination, as to how the things were made, and in what order ; and how one arose out of another.

But that which utterly amazed me, was that very few sounded the gong, and went in to consult the maker ; and that by the multitude he was entirely forgotten. It was all the same as if the mechanisms had made themselves. The people had no feeling of admiration, nor of gratitude, towards the great cause of all these things. He remained alone, and unseen, and forgotten, whilst men gossiped, and laughed, or reasoned, or taught, in sight of his works, and close to himself.

I marvelled whether he would have done all this for them had he known the return they would make ; but I was wrong to do this, so great is his goodness and wisdom ; and so high he is above all that petty resentment which is too common in the world. Nevertheless, I think these men hurt themselves by their silly and culpable neglect, and lost what no one else could bestow on them.

Root Pruning.*

THERE was a fruit tree in the garden, or what should have been one ; but it seldom bore anything. The gardener cut away many of its branches, but still it was barren. At last he thought of root-

* On the upper pruning the poet sings in this grand passage :—

“ Behold this vine,
I found it a wild tree, whose wanton strength
Had swoln into irregular twigs
And bold excrescences,
And spent itself in leaves and little rings,
So in the flourish of its outwardness
Wasting the sap and strength
That should have given forth fruit.
But when I pruned the plant,
Then it grew temperate in its vain expense
Of useless leaves, and knotted, as thou seest,
Into these full clean clusters, to repay
The hand that wisely wounded it.
Repine not, O my son !
In wisdom and in mercy Heaven inflicts
Its painful remedies.”—*Thalaba*, Book VIII.

pruning. He considered that the tree wasted itself in spreading out its roots in the ground, and that if it had fewer roots it would be better, so he dug all around it, and cut away half its roots ; and then, though no longer so rich in fibre and root below, and maimed and disfigured by loss of branches above, it began at last to bear fruit ; and was spared. Otherwise it would have been rooted up altogether, and burned as a useless incumbrance.

Begging.

A BEGGAR who constantly hung about the door of a charitable person, had always asked for something and received something, although it was not always the exact thing which he begged for. This went on a long time, and then one day the owner of the house passed out, left the beggar, and gave him nothing at all. This occurred several times. At last the beggar grew very angry, and stopped his benefactor, and asked him in a very insolent manner why he now gave him no help.

The good man answered kindly, but gravely, "Because it is useless. You never were thankful, and that I put up with. But this is not all. Whatever I gave you, you wasted. You never do anything to help yourself. You never try to improve what I bestow on you, although I have given you things which were meant for use, and which showed you at once that, if

they had been used, they would have become more and more serviceable to you. I have people on my estate for whom I have not done half so much as I have for you. I shall give you no more until you come to me and say that you will really make use of my bounty, and no longer waste it. I am not turning stingy, as you very likely suppose. I shall henceforth give to another what I used to give to you. But I will waste my bounty no longer."

The beggar went away much ashamed. He had nothing to answer.

The City of Palaces.

A MAN lived in a poor country town, which he thought very grand. Every big house in it appeared to him fit for a king, and he was very proud of his own house. One day, however, a stranger came, who spoke much of a City of Palaces. At first the man would not believe in it, but when the stranger showed him pictures of its glorious buildings and gardens, and proved to him by various solid arguments the truth of them all, the man's spirit fainted within him. He despised his own town, and his house. They appeared mean and contemptible. He sold all he had and set out by a long and tedious route, through many hardships and perils, towards the City of Palaces, and reached it at last; and there, to his inexpressible joy, he found his own name inscribed over the door of one of its mansions.

Transparent

A MAN was shipwrecked on a strange coast, and having advanced a little way up the country he came to a large village. As soon as he did so, he was surrounded by people, and to his astonishment he found that they spoke his own language. But what astonished him far more, was that they stared at him as if they were reading him through and through, and then began talking to each other scornfully. He began to listen to what passed, and he was amazed and horrified to find that he had fallen amongst a people who had the gift of inward sight; that is to say, they could read the heart. The poor man found that all his follies, and infirmities, and even his sins were the topic of universal conversation. There was nothing in him which the natives did not know. All his boyish sins, and the transgressions of his youth, were open to their eyes, and cruel and scornful were

the remarks which they were making one to another concerning him.

At last the poor fellow could bear this treatment no longer. Burning with shame and grief he rushed into the forest, seeking the wildest and most inaccessible spots, and at last, breathless and exhausted, he threw himself down under a tree many miles from his persecutors.

Scarcely had he recovered himself a little, before he was conscious of one standing over him.

"Persecute me no more," he cried, not daring to look up. "I cannot endure it. I shall drown myself, or do some desperate deed. I cannot bear the shame and agony longer."

"I am not come to persecute," replied a gentle voice, "but to help you. Why did you fly from your fellow-creatures?"

"They know all my sins. They read my heart. I cannot bear it."

"Is there so much evil, then, in you?"

"Yes, indeed. Would God—" but he could speak no more.

"But tell me, my friend, which is the greatest evil, to have loathsome and deadly wounds, or to have them seen?"

“To have them,” he replied, “but it makes it worse to have them known.”

“But, if having them known, is the way to have them cured ; what then ?”

The poor fellow was silent.

“Would you like to have the same power of reading the heart which your persecutors possess ? Some people comfort themselves in this way. When they find that others are as bad as they are, they recover, and gain courage—shall I say ? No, they gain impudence. Will you have this power ?”

“No, not for worlds. I could not live if I thought all the world were as bad as I have been. I would rather not know. No, for God’s sake ! No. It would not heal my present wounds, but would make fresh sores.”

“It is well,” replied the stranger. “Do you know that I have been reading your heart all this time ? I know all you have ever said, and all you have ever done. Does not this make you ashamed, and make you rush away from me ?”

“No ; you are so different. I am ashamed because I am not more ashamed that you should know all ; but your kindness is so great that I do not feel my wickedness as I ought. I know I ought to feel it all the more, and I think I do, and I wish to do so. Oh !

that I might be such that you might look into me without pain."

"You shall," replied the master. "Go back to the village, and be patient ; but look at me first."

So he looked, but turned away again, saying, "I cannot, I cannot. I wish to do it, but I cannot."

"Well, then, wait. Go back, as I said."

He went back. The people looked into him, and saw a change. He was not like them, not one of them. They hated him. He bore all their unkindness very meekly, but it did not avail. They hated him more and more, till he fled from them into the forest. There the stranger met him, and encouraged him, and showed him how different he was from his old self, and bade him go back again ; and he took heart, and looked at his friend for a short time and no more. Then he returned, and was thankful that the people told him his faults, for he had forgotten many of them, and he wished to see them in their true light, and be humble ; and thus there came to shine a light within him, and a halo of light encircled his head, and the people marvelled at him, and scoffed at him, and some were changed by his example and became like him, but the majority hated him more and more, and finally slew him. But, when he was dead, a voice

sounded at night, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Come to me. Fear not! I knew thee for good."

In the morning the body lay where it had been slain, with a calm expression on the face. The people looked at it, but could no longer read or know the soul, which once dwelt in it. It was beyond their reach. So they went on, satisfied that their neighbours were as bad as themselves, and remaining unaltered; but the soul of the departed was seen and saw, and endured the being seen in the joy of seeing its deliverer from shame. In fact, the shame was consumed in the heat and light of compassionate love.

Open Questions.

A YOUNG man went up to London, where he was met at the station by a friend's friend, who was asked to look after him and keep him from mischief, and show him the world. Rather a hard task to do both! Robert, the Londoner, received Richard, the countryman, kindly enough, and, after consigning the luggage to the hotel, they walked forth together. As they walked, Robert asked Richard whether he knew Lady S., who had lived in Robert's neighbourhood, and who was then in the Divorce Court. Richard spoke very slightly of her, and of the Divorce Court; on which Robert said, "Well, that is an open question. The whole subject of marriage is such."

Richard stared; and shortly remarked on the great number of churches.

"Too many by half," replied Robert.

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“Why ? there cannot be enough for the population, numerous as they are.”

“Well ; that’s as people think,” he replied. “Let us leave religion an open question.”

Presently they came in sight of Buckingham Palace, on which Richard remarked, “What a Queen we have ! What a blessing it is to live in a land where the Sovereign is so much, and so deservedly loved ! I should be very sorry to live in America.”

“That, again,” said his friend, “is an open question. Some people think one way, and some another.”

In the evening the young men dined together, and then went to the theatre ; and after that Robert took his simple friend to a gambling-house, which did not appear such at first, but of the character of which Richard was fully convinced by the emptiness of his pockets when he left it.

Richard was now excited with wine and with vexation, and as they crossed the parks he was surly ; and at last turned sharply on his companion, and asked him whether he was not ashamed of himself for taking a friend to such a house on the first night of his visit to London.

Robert denied that he was so ashamed.

“Have you no conscience, then ?” exclaimed Richard.

“Conscience! that is an open question, whether there is such a thing, or whether it is merely a prejudice of our education.”

“I tell you what,” cried out Richard, “I am tired of these open questions; and we will close one of them at any rate. We will settle, now and for ever, which is the best man of the two.”

So saying, he threw his coat on the ground, and gave him a thrashing, such as he had never had in his life. Next day Robert summoned Richard, and after hearing both sides the magistrate said that both were to blame. He should dismiss the case. It was an open question who struck the first blow, or who gave provocation.

Thus the friends parted as enemies. It is an open question still, whether Robert was more knave than Richard was fool, or the reverse.

To the Point.

A MAN had a son who, with many good qualities, had some great failings, in which he resembled the reader. Not that it is here said which the reader has, good qualities or bad, or whether he has both. Far from that—far from that. What the boy's bad qualities were, however, will appear from this conversation.

Father. "Tom, why did you not go to the town yesterday, as I told you?"

Boy. "Oh, father, have you heard that Mr. B.'s bull has tossed Mr. A.'s servant?"

Father. "I did not ask you about that, Tom. I asked why you did not do what I told you?"

Boy. "I know, father. I was going to explain; but it is very strange. I can't make it out. There have been two carriages past here already."

Father. "Tom, will you answer me, or not?"

Boy. "Certainly, father, I am answering you, but I must tell you what you will be glad to hear. The old sow has a litter of thirteen."

Father. "And you are the cad, Tom. Will you answer my question, or not? Why did not you do what I told you?"

Boy. "Sure, enough, father, that is what I am doing; but you do not see what I mean."

Father. "Yes, I do. You mean to shirk my question, if you can, but—"

Boy. "Oh, no, father. Don't say so. There's Jem Jones. You might say so of him, but — what do you think? I was just going — only think, father, Mrs. C. has taken her honey to-day, and there were 40 lbs. in each hive. Three hives! Only think of that!"

Father. "Tom, this is your last chance. Either tell me, or say you won't, which you like, right straight out."

Boy. "I know you'll be so pleased, father. Master says I've got on in my sums, and my writing is improved. I knew you would be pleased. Arn't you, father?"

The father made no reply; but a few days afterwards he drove his son along the Old North Road through Woburn, and the cutting, and the tall fir trees,

till they came to the cottages where the labyrinth is. He then went in and spoke to the people who lived there; whilst Tom held the horse. Presently a boy came out and took Tom's place, and his father beckoned Tom into the garden, and led him into the labyrinth. Having done this, he went out himself and left his son in the middle. When he was well outside he called out, "Tom, you like roundabouts, don't you? You may stay there till you can find your way out. Good-bye."

Tom heard the gig drive off. He called out for help. No one answered. Round and round he went, until he was ready to fall with fatigue. Evening came on. He was very hungry. He got close to the edge often, but never came to the opening. He lay down at last, weeping bitterly.

Presently, as it was nearly dark, he heard the sound of wheels. "Tom," called his father, "are you tired of roundabouts? Can you give a straightforward answer? Do you wish to come out, or not?"

Tom answered "Yes" very decidedly. He was then led out and taken home; and ever after he went straight to the point when he was asked any question; straighter even than a cabinet minister does in reply to a deputation.

The Picture.

THERE was a young preacher who was considered very eloquent, and who also considered himself so. One day he preached on Heaven, and tried to describe it, and spoke of Him that dwelleth therein ; and he painted a picture of glory and happiness ; and all seemed very spiritual and supernal ; and his hearers were in raptures with him, and he with himself. Then he went out hot and weary to the sea-side to see the sun set, and he marked a young man painting ; and went up, and watched him silently from behind. The painter tried to put the beauteous colours of the evening sky on his canvas ; but there was a thickness in all that he did. He could not give the lucid transparent hues. His outlines also were harsh ; his clouds solid, grotesque, or else misty. The deep, clear, endless space ; the unspeakable beauty, the unimaginable beauty, unearthly, spiritual, ravishing, soul-

subduing, he could not paint it. His greatest attempts were his worst failures. At last he tried to paint the sun himself in all his setting glory ; and the contrast between the original and the picture was most painful. It was a mere daub if intended to represent the sunset.

The preacher stood, and looked on with a proud smile of contempt. Presently the painter turned and looked at him. He started. The artist was himself, and none other. There was his own figure, his own face ; and the preacher hid his face in his hands, and sat down and wept on the sea-shore ; and rose up a humbler and a wiser man than he was before.

The Body Guard.

THERE was a great king, who heard that a neighbouring country was kept in sore bondage by a victorious enemy. Out of pity he sent his only son to deliver the sufferers. Many battles were fought. In the last the prince completely vanquished the foe, but laid down his own life in obtaining the victory.

From that time forward the youths of this liberated land were trained for the service of the king, and, as soon as they were ready they were sent to him, and enrolled in the host which encircled him ; and, held in high honour, executed his commands with grateful alacrity. Electus was one of these youths. Trained in the use of arms, instructed in his duties, clad in the uniform of the king, and presented with beautiful weapons, both offensive and defensive, the day came when he was to set forth on his march to join the court of the king. Before he did this he was warned against

the various perils of the journey ; bidden to remember the badge under which he served ; to be cautious and bold ; and, with the good wishes of those who had brought him up, he started on his way to the king.

For a time Electus kept to the road, thinking sometimes of the good friends whom he had left, and still more of the glorious end of his journey. By degrees, however, these thoughts had less and less effect on his mind. Other thoughts came into it, and he began to take increasing interest in the objects around him. Presently, on the top of a bush, he observed a beautiful humming bird. It seemed formed of all the jewels he had ever seen, or read of ; or rather the rainbow seemed to have condensed itself into one living creature, so transparent and ethereal were the exquisite hues of the bird. Electus paused in astonishment, and then hastened to catch the prize and make it his own. This was not so easy. It was always close to him, and always at a distance. He seemed to touch it, but he never could take it. From flower to flower, from bush to bush, from thicket to thicket, he followed. At last it rested on the leaf of a rose-tree. He rushed forwards, and too late felt himself falling. When he awoke from a state of insensibility, he found himself lying in the darkness of night at the foot of a precipice.

Then Electus began to think of the cautions he had received and forgotten; and when at morn he rose up bruised and wounded, and tried to recover the road he had quitted, he resolved to be more cautious hereafter. As, however, Electus was seeking to recover the road, he came suddenly on a beautiful valley, shut in with hills and flowering trees, and watered by a stream which refreshed the groves, the birds of which sang back to the murmuring river; and on a mossy bank under a rock he suddenly came in sight of a beautiful damsel, who sat weeping most pitifully. Electus had been cautioned against a woman who frequented the forest, but not against one in distress; and he naturally stopped and asked what was the cause of her trouble, and how he could help her. Her tale was that she had been forsaken by her uncle, and left there to perish, and she began weeping again.

There was something most winning in her tones and her manner, and as Electus watched her he thought he had never seen anything so lovely, so worthy of kindness. He sat down beside her and cheered her, and the maiden became happy with a strange readiness; and then her open eyes sparkled with joy, and she was as winning in happiness as she had before been in sorrow.

Hour after hour passed as Electus sat by her enchanted ; nor did he observe a small serpent which stole out from the folds of her dress, and gradually drew near his hand which held hers. Indeed, he scarce felt the bite, or the numbness which gradually stole over his frame, until he tried to rise and found he could not. He fainted away, and would have died on the spot, had not an old man come by who saw how things stood, and, with a severe glance at the damsel, which made her hasten away, administered strong remedies to the youth, who slowly recovered, and after a time arose, and with a heavy heart resumed the road which was pointed out to him, with many kind warnings, by the hermit.

Further on in the forest the trees grew thinner and thinner. The oak gave way to the birch, and the birch to the pine ; and then snow-clad mountains rose up before him, shining in the sun. A narrow path wound round one of the mountains. It was clearly the right way, but to go straight on seemed nearer, and Electus was seized with an indescribable desire to climb. Up and up he toiled, sometimes wading through soft snow, sometimes sliding on the frozen surface, sometimes leaping over deep crevices. Thousands upon thousands of feet, on he went ; and the

higher he went the more he burned with the desire of reaching the summit, when suddenly his feet slipped from under him, and he fell sheer down, striking from time to time on some crag, until he lay senseless at the bottom of a sunless crevasse like one dead.

How long Electus lay there he knew not ; but he had been seen by the good monks who lived on the mountain, and with the greatest difficulty was rescued and carried up to the monastery, where he was tenderly watched by the good people until he recovered, and was then started on the downward path, with much good advice and many a prayer for his safety.

Sobered now, and more cautious after his previous mishaps, the result of his folly, Electus pursued his way to the plain. As he drew near it the hills became covered with verdure, and at the base he came suddenly into a sort of garden of flowers and fruits. The smiling place spread out before him, starred with cities, and gleaming with rivers ; and round him grapes hung in clusters, and luscious fruits only waited for him to gather them. He partook of them freely, and a sense of weariness came over him after his toils. He cared for nothing except for repose, which was only broken by continual feasting on the fruits which surrounded him. Electus had become very thin by

his labours and his illness, and the hardships of the journey ; but now he grew fat. He seemed quite a different man ; sleek and portly. He had gained flesh, but, if he had cared to go forwards, he would soon have found that he had lost strength ; and his good looks were deceiving. He did not, however, desire to move. He had become a mere animal, living to live, eating for pleasure ; sleeping for weariness ; incapable of any exertion, or even the wish for it. Whatever cost him trouble was odious.

All this went on for a time, but one day Electus felt ill, very ill. His pain increased hourly ; his eyes were dim, his limbs burning with fever. He felt himself dying. As he thus lay, he began to think of the king and of the object of his journey, and was very anxious about it, but he could do nothing. He had not even strength to think long or deeply on anything. At last he murmured a cry of sorrow and a call for help, and his senses went from him.

But a stranger had passed and observed him, and at once administered a medicine which roused Electus from his lethargy, and brought him back to himself. Very bitter were the medicines administered by the kind traveller. Long nights of sadness and faintness succeeded, but at last the fever gave way, and Electus

began to recover. Then the stranger spoke very seriously to him, made him confess all his follies, showed him how faithless he had been to his prince, and made him promise to travel straight on henceforth till he came to the court.

Electus fully intended to do what he promised, but at the foot of the hills, as he rested on the edge of the stream, he observed the banks shining with gold. It was an auriferous river. He began to collect the precious deposit; and, the more he got, the more he desired. Soon he was not contented with the fine sand of the stream; he must find the solid masses of gold which it wore away and washed to the plain. He ascended the river and turned his back, for the first time, on the land of the king. Presently he came to rocks shining with ore, and he began to break pieces off and heap them all together. Gold, gold, nothing but gold. He lived on berries and grew thinner than he was when he toiled up the mountains; but still gold, gold; heap upon heap; more than he could carry, more than he wanted. How and where could he take it? Sometimes he thought of this, but not often. He was wholly occupied with the desire of increasing his wealth, and had no time for reflection.

One day he looked into the stream, and to his

astonishment saw that his hair had turned grey. "How long, then, had he been at this work? What was his age? He must go forwards at once? What would the king say to him? Would he care to have him now?" Such thoughts passed through his mind; but they did not prick his conscience, as might have been expected, for he was grown dull and callous. The quickness of his feelings was gone, and the heart within him was shrunken and cold. So he went to his work again.

But one day he fell ill; and as he lay there two of the body-guard of the king passed and saw the badge on him, and lifted him up, and carried him, and laid him down speechless at the feet of the king.

Electus looked up, and, when he beheld the king, his spirit fainted within him. He remembered his wanderings, and not only this, but the fact that he had never pursued his journey consistently, and at last had abandoned it altogether. The thought was an agony.

The king looked on him silently, and Electus saw that he was one to have been loved and served with all the strength of the heart, and he wept; and the king looked on him still, and Electus wept more. "He does not turn away from me utterly," he said to himself, and wept more; and he never thought of his

gold, which was all left behind. Then a dimness came over his eyes, and they closed. The attendants bore him away. There was love in the grave sorrow which appeared in their face and manner, a reflection from the face of the king; so that we may hope he found mercy, though we know not.

Falling Houses.

ON a headland, jutting far out into the sea, stood an ancient fishing village. The ground on which it was built was always on the move, because the ocean kept washing away the cliff. In fact, the whole headland will, in the end, be carried away. The consequence was that the cottages were cracked in every direction. It was useless to repair them; and they were unsafe and miserable.

When the nobleman on whose land the village stood, observed the state of things, he built a new hamlet on the other side of the bay, in a much better situation, and of much better materials. The new village was safe and beautiful, but no one would go to it. The cottagers stuck to their old homes, and would not move.

It was in vain that the nobleman told them that their ruinous dwellings were unsafe; that they must

move before long, anyhow, for the cliff was going ; that they endured cold and rain, and suffered many inconveniences in their falling hovels. They could not be persuaded to remove. Then the nobleman, out of mere kindness, and for the sake of the people, unroofed the falling houses, and pulled them down. This was the only way, and he mercifully took it for their good.

The Old Gardener.

A YOUNG man employed in the garden of a certain Prince who resided at a distance, was full of intelligence and energy. These qualities led him constantly to observe defects and to form plans of improvement. He found fault with his superiors, and was uppish and over-confident in himself. He thought to himself, "If I were only head-gardener I would remedy this and that; prevent idleness and waste; would make the garden twice as productive, and the grounds twice as beautiful as they are now; and not only this, but I would set an example to the world, and introduce a totally new system—a new era in the art, discarding the ignorant prejudices of our forefathers." Well, time rolled on. The head-gardener died, and another was appointed. Men moved up in succession, and the young man,

young no longer, at last became chief, and could have his way, and carry out his plans at his leisure. Some of these schemes, however, growing wisdom had already shown him to be impracticable, and others he had greatly modified. The rest he set himself to accomplish. He found, however, opposition here, and neglect there. There were still weeds, still failures: not only frosts, and drought, and blight remained, but remediable evils were uncured, through the idleness and ignorance of those who worked under him. The garden produced but little more than it used to do, and looked but little better than when he entered it as a boy. All was imperfect still, and he was now responsible for the failures. He could not be everywhere. He could not put old heads on young shoulders. He could not improve the world, and so he could not perfect the garden. Moreover, he made mistakes himself. Meantime, he was growing old, less active, less capable of contending with others, feeling incompetent, and distrusting his own judgment too much. He moved about slowly and sadly, lamenting the evils which he was unable to remedy. The Prince was very kind all the time, made every allowance for the poor fellow, and tried to console him.

Still the old man was weary and sad, and then the Prince, out of kindness, gave him leave to retire, offering him a home elsewhere. He thankfully accepted the offer, and gladly resigned his power together with its responsibilities.

He had done his best on the whole, but his best was imperfect. He had formed hopes which could not be fulfilled, but he had honestly laboured to fulfil them. This was his consolation, together with the kindness of the Prince. He blamed himself for blaming others, when he was young, for things on account of which others might justly now blame him in turn ; and found less fault and grew more gentle. He even learned to smile with a sort of satisfaction when he heard one of his men say, "There goes old George," just as he had said in his time, "There's old Thomas." There was a justice in his hearing this, which pleased him ; and when the Prince removed him to the gardens of another palace, he peacefully passed from his old haunts and was forgotten ; but he lived in a milder climate and serener air, and enjoyed being nobody there, and free from cares. There also he saw the good Prince frequently, for there the Prince made his home, and there grew his fairest

flowers. Meanwhile, in the old garden there are weeds, and caterpillars, and birds, and mice as there were before George became gardener, and while he was gardener ; and so there will be when his conceited successor has become humble, and passed away like old George.

Children.

I SAW a number of children bathing in the river Jordan, and when they came out they were clad in a white garment, and began sporting on the banks.

They were so numerous that I could not count them, and I therefore confined my attention to one group, which I watched until I knew their faces as well as if they had been my own children. The expression of their countenances differed, although not so much so as their features, but all had a charming simplicity and frankness. You could see straight through their faces to their hearts, much as you can look through a clear stream to the bright stones in its channel ; and their faces laughed and played like the dimple of running waters in the sun.

Presently a clear ringing voice called them together, and bade them begin their journey to Jerusalem ; and

now I noticed for the first time that each child was attended by a bright being, whose features I could not discern, and who seemed to act as a guard and guide to the child over whom he was watching.

As soon as the journey was commenced, the characters of the children began to display themselves. Some began to wander here and there, and their guardians had great difficulty in bringing them back into the road. Some ran clean away on the road to Jericho, and most of these I beheld no more, but two or three who were recovered by their guides came back sadly changed. Their garments were torn and stained, their faces sad, and they limped in the rear of the others. Presently, one of those who had been recovered broke away again, and was seen no more, but the rest seemed very humble and docile, and although their faces were sad, I recognized the same open simple expression which had charmed me so much at the beginning.

As for the rest of the little company, some wandered out of the track a few steps and returned; some loitered; some went on too fast, lost their strength, and fell behind; others who persevered underwent a change as they proceeded; for some gathered together in parties, and talked a great deal, and did

not attend to their guides; some walked on ahead with a proud step, and looked back at times scornfully on their comrades; others lost time in gathering flowers; others in picking up bright yellow stones by the road-side. All these underwent a change of countenance. The open, simple, childlike look had departed, and in its place was a sly expression, or dull, or angry, or proud. The pilgrims went on, indeed, but they were not what they were. A small company, however, walked gently and humbly, and although sometimes they stopped or turned aside to help a companion, yet they never fell back into the rear, and always seemed the same, wherever they were, always simple children. So night fell on the pilgrims, and they lay down where they were and slept, and I slept as well; but, when the morning streaked the sky, all awoke suddenly, and behold! they were under the walls of Jerusalem, and stood waiting outside. As they did so, a gate opened quickly and a stream of light burst through, which made the other light seem to be darkness; and brighter than this stream of light appeared a band of shining ones, and brighter even than these One came forth and met the pilgrim children, and looked on them attentively. He seemed to judge them by

their faces. Those that had kept the childlike, innocent expression He called to Him, and embraced them, and, collecting them together, He led them into the city, and the gate closed behind, and strains of music came wafted on the breeze from the midst of the city. But the rest were left weeping outside, and darkness fell on them, and I saw no more.

Spring-tides.

THERE was a marsh redeemed from the sea and protected by an earth wall with stone facing. It belonged to a young man named Elton, who was bound to keep it up, not only for his own sake, but also for that of his neighbours. He was told that it was too low, and accordingly he raised it, and was very proud of his work, when completed. One autumn there was a strong north wind at the same time as the equinox, and there was a general alarm, shared by Elton, lest the wall should give way or be found too low. To meet the danger, a great number of men were employed, who laid a quantity of clay mixed with straw on the top of the embankment. The tide rose and rose, and the sea beat furiously on the wall, and at one time was nearly on a level with the top, and the bank shook and trembled under foot, and every one was afraid, but the danger passed off. Next day

the tide was a foot lower, next day lower still. The peril was over, and Elton, congratulating himself on the strength of his works, dismissed the men, and took to his usual employments. A wet season then set in, with moderate winds, and all went well, except that the wheat was not got in, and a poor harvest was expected next year.

About St. Thomas's day the spring-tide was due. Elton thought nothing of it, and went to his rest. At midnight he heard voices, and sprang out of bed. His men begged him to come quickly. He was dressed in a minute, and they all sallied forth towards the wall, with lanterns and spades. As they drew near they saw a white line on the top, and the land side seemed bright, and they thought they heard water. On they pushed rapidly, but it was too late. A tide, lower than the first two of those terrible days, had washed off the loose clay, and was pouring over the wall. They laid bags of earth on the top, drove in stakes, and laboured hard, but there was an hour yet before high tide, and by that time the sea had made a clean breach; no one could resist it, and the marsh was inundated. At the ebb a hundred men worked with might and main at the breach. Carts, trees, clay, everything was pitched in, and piles driven to secure

the loose fabric, and then they anxiously watched the result.

The tide steadily rose, the work stood, but trembled. Then the pressure of the rising water increased. Rollers came in, one after another, and struck it like huge mallets, and on a sudden the whole of the new work gave way, and fell inwards, and the sea rushed in with headlong force, carrying everything before it. The marsh became a lake, the neighbouring farms were flooded, and from that day to this, although the inland fields have been redeemed, yet the property of Elton has been that of the ocean, and he, ruined and desperate, disappeared from the country, and no one knows what is become of him. The wise men shake their heads whenever he is mentioned, and say, "Ah, poor young man, if he had not been so confident after that first bout with the tide, he might have been here with us still. It was his doing so well then which was his ruin. He thought nothing could hurt him."

The Firs.

THERE was a grove of firs, amongst which one overtopped all the rest, and was a king of the wood. The rest envied him, but in vain. At last the top shoot but one said to the shoot below him, "I want a larger allowance of sap, and, if you do not grant it, I will not pass up any more." The other replied, "You have enough. See how well we have done. We have beaten all our neighbours." "I don't care," said the other, "I will have it, and if not—well, you know my terms." Then the other said, "I will speak to my friend below, and see what can be done." He did so, and the answer was, "I cannot of myself. I will speak to my neighbour." So this neighbour replied as his friend had done, and his friend spoke to the trunk, and the trunk spoke to the roots, and the roots to the earth. Finally, the earth gave her reply, saying, "I have well considered your

demand. It is not only unreasonable but impracticable. I have supplied you sufficiently, and I have no power to do more. I advise you all to reconsider the matter, and well weigh the consequences."

Then the answer was conveyed by gradations up the tree to the top shoot but one, and the top shoot hearing what was going on, called out, "I pray you have a thought of me. I shall die if I am not fed." But the shoot below said, "Don't talk to me. I have made up my mind. I will not pass on the sap." All this was reported to the earth, who groaned, but said nothing.

First the top shoot withered and died. Then the others became gnarled and unhealthy, and meantime the trees around rejoiced, made good use of their time, shot up, and overtopped their once superior neighbour.

After some few years, the obstinate shoot saw its folly, but too much time had been wasted. The tree is outstripped, and has lost its pre-eminence.

On a summer's eve, when the trees whisper, one was heard saying, "What a fool that tree was," to which another replied, "I am sorry for it," but a chorus of voices, which startled the doves, called out, "We are not. It was its own fault, and we have gained by its folly." The unhappy pine, fallen from

its pride, creaked and groaned as it listened ; and kind mother earth, who is too charitable to reproach the unhappy, moaned gently to herself, and then there was silence. Next morning, the former king of the wood was the last tree whose top was gilded by the sun as he rose over the hills.

Speckled Birds.

A SPECKLED bird appeared amidst a flock which was feeding at the foot of a mountain. Immediately there was a commotion. The birds began staring at it, and making the rudest and unkindest remarks. Some of the spots were indeed very ugly, and they were derided accordingly. Others were even pretty, but new to the other birds—peculiarities, in short, and these excited quite as much ridicule. Such a chattering and screaming was never heard before in those parts. At last the birds proceeded from hard words to cruel actions. One pecked the poor stranger, and then another, until, wounded and frightened and ashamed, it escaped at last by hiding itself under a bush.

When it was gone, the chattering subsided by degrees, and the birds felt very thirsty, and so looking around they saw a bright pool of water, which they

had never set eyes on before. They examined it, and saw that it was fed by a stream which came down from mountains, rising up pile upon pile, and piercing the clouds. In fact, the brook seemed to flow out of Heaven itself.

Having satisfied their eyes with the beautiful sight, the birds were seized with a desire to taste these strange waters, and alighted on the edge of the quiet pool, clear as crystal, and glassing every object in the mirror of its beautiful face.

As each bird looked down before it touched the pool with its beak, it stopped short with amazement. It saw itself reflected therein, and perceived that it also was speckled, and that its spots were more numerous and unsightly than those of the poor bird which it had recently persecuted.

Long time each bird stood aghast, and dared not look around for fear it should be attacked by its mates. Gradually, however, each bird stole sly glances at the image of its neighbour, glassed like its own in the water. To their amazement, the birds saw that all the other birds were spotted as well as themselves.

At last the leader broke the long silence, and said, "We are all spotted, you see. All like the poor stranger. Alas! we have been very unjust. Hence-

forth, my friends, let us have less of pride, more of charity. Let us seek out the poor sister, whom we drove from us with scorn, and let us dwell peaceably one with another, and let no speckled bird find fault with the spots of his neighbour until he is free from his own." The whole flock agreed to this judgment, and thenceforth all was peace, and the discord of voices gave way to harmony along the banks of the Heavenborn stream, which is christened, "The Truth."

Barnacles.

“**D**ID you hear what the captain said just now?”
said one barnacle to another.

“No. What did he say?”

“He said to the mate, that the ship did not sail so well as she did; and the mate answered, ‘No wonder. She is very foul. I’ll be bound she’s coated with barnacles.’”

“Did he, though? That is awkward. How selfish men are. They only think of themselves.”

“But suppose that men say in return that we only think of ourselves?”

“Well, what else can we do? Our grandfather always used to say that the rule of our race has ever been and always shall be, ‘Stick to your friends.’”

“Yes. But grandmother said, ‘Choose your friends. Don’t go where you’re not wanted.’”

“Well, but how could we help it! Could we go

floating about in the world? It can't be expected. We should have been lost, eaten up, if we had 'not stuck to what came handy at once.' "

"True, but it would have been better to have stuck to the rocks ; for, see, rocks do not want to move. We should not vex them."

"Vex them ! No, they have no feeling. But now we see the world, travelling for nothing, and we are safe ; and what matters to us if the captain does grumble ? What difference can you and I make to the ship, I should like to know ?"

"Well. That is as people think. We certainly make a convenience of the ship. We don't do it any good ; and as for being safe, we shall see."

"Yes, of course, but I shall stick on. I don't see what the use of a friend is, unless you can gain some advantage out of him."

So the conversation dropped.

After some weeks, the ship ran into port ; her cargo was unloaded ; and then, to the amazement of the barnacles, she was placed in a dry dock ; and they lost their supply of salt water. Then a number of men came alongside with tools in their hands, having a short handle and a triangular piece of iron at the end. These tools they applied to the sides of the ship, and

at every stroke numbers of barnacles fell off to the bottom and died.

“ This is a terrible scrape,” said the former speaker to his neighbour. “ We shall be polished off.”

“ I told you how it would be,” said the other.

“ But,——”

At that instant the speaker was scraped off the side of the vessel, and his speech was cut short. It was clear that the ship did not properly appreciate the pertinacious adherence of those who were strongly attached to her.

One Bad Thread.

THERE was a silk weaver in the days of hand-
looms. He had woven a piece some feet long,
and he had to put some more materials in for the
woof. He took up a reel in his hand, and looked at
it, and an old friend who stood by talking with him
said to him,

"I would not put that in, if I were you. There is
something amiss with it."

"I don't know," said the weaver, "I fancy it is one
that was dropped into some stuff my wife had for
cleaning some of her traps; but it is dry now, and
looks all right, only a little dull."

"Well, I wouldn't do it, if I were you," said his
friend. "It is not worth much, and you may just spoil
the piece with it."

However, the weaver would not be persuaded. He
put it in, and the shuttle rattled it in and out with

the other threads of the weft across the beautiful shining silk of the web ; and the work was done. When completed, the weaver looked at it, and even with his glasses he could not distinguish the questionable thread from the rest of the work ; so he went on, and at the end of the week took his handiwork to the town for sale. The last few days had been wet, and the day, on which he took the silk for sale, was damp and close ; so that the evil which lay in the one thread put forth its power. When the purchaser examined the piece, he hesitated, got his glasses, looked at the silk and then at the weaver.

“You are unfortunate,” he said, “you have used one bad thread by mistake. Look here. It shows all through, and, not only that, but is spoiling the rest. What a pity you did not see it. I am truly sorry for your mistake. I cannot buy your work.”

The poor man went home with a heavy heart. He had not the comfort which the merchant sought to bestow. He could not look upon the thing as a mistake and an oversight. He knew, when he ran the risk, that he did so. He knew what one bad thread could do ; and yet he wove it in inextricably with the rest, and spoiled all.

The Tea Taster.

A LAD was sent up by his parents to London to work in the tea warehouse of his uncle. There it was soon discovered that he had a wonderfully fine and nice taste, and could discern one tea from another, and distinguish the better from the inferior without even hesitating. He was accordingly appointed tea-taster, with a high salary.

It was a curious thing to see him in his office with a number of small tea-pots standing on shelves, from which he took a small portion, and on tasting it, decided at once on the character and value of the particular tea.

So he got his living, and would shortly have risen into a partner, when unhappily he took to evil ways, ate and drank coarsely and excessively, became bloated and unhealthy-looking, and in consequence made mistakes in his choice of the teas ; mistakes which became

more and more frequent ; until attention was fairly aroused, and it was found that he had lost the fineness and nicety of his taste, and could no longer distinguish the good from the bad, the pure from the impure. So he lost his position, and went down and down in life, until he died miserably in a lodging-house in a dark alley, unknown to his friends and a warning to others. What warning ? There is more meant in these fables than appears at first sight.

I Really Don't Know.

THERE was a young man who had been well brought up, but who was not very sensible. He read every book that came out, went to every church and chapel, took in all the newspapers and magazines; talked well on one side of a question, and then on the other. At last he became indifferent as to which side it was which he opposed or defended. It seemed all alike to him. There was so much to be said for this, and so much to be said against that, that he thought no one could be sure enough to say he was right and the other man wrong. In fact it came to this, that either there was no truth at all anywhere, or else no one could find out that truth, so as to be sure that he had it. Thus the youth became very indifferent as to religion, and very popular: for he never contradicted anyone except the unhappy man who had a faith, and said, "I really believe this."

Such a man was of course disliked by our hero, whose motto was, "I really don't know."

Well, the youth lived freely, and got poorer and poorer. It was not long before a break-up would be coming. In this state of things, a stranger called on him one day, and sent in his card, on which was written the name of a foreigner residing at Rotterdam.

On entering the room the foreigner apologized for his intrusion, and then proceeded to state that he came to inquire whether Mr. Smith was not distantly related to the family of Schmidt of Rotterdam?

"I really don't know," replied the philosopher.

"But, Sir," proceeded the stranger, "permit me to inquire whether your grandfather did not emigrate to England from Rotterdam?"

"I really do not know," was the answer.

"But, Sir, let me beg you to think it over. Did you never hear such a report in your family, as that you did come from my country?"

"If you wish to know, Sir, I have."

"And do you not believe it?"

"Believe it? No, Sir. It may be so, but I cannot tell."

"Have you never inquired?"

"Not I, what is it to me?"

“Suppose, Sir, there was some benefit to be derived from your tracing your descent to one man who resided in Holland?”

“Descent from one man! Why, Sir, you cannot be up with the literature of the day. Do you believe in an Adam and Eve? Do you imagine all mankind had one common forefather? I don't; and so I do not believe that all the Smiths come from one Smith.”

“Very likely they don't, although I do believe, Sir, that all men come from one Adam. But it is quite possible that you may be descended from Burgomaster Schmidt.”

“Quite possible, and as possibly not.”

“There are reasons for thinking that you are of this family.”

“And reasons for thinking the contrary.”

“Will you inquire, at least, and see into it?”

“Certainly not.”

“Why not?”

“Why not? Don't you know that you cannot believe what people think on these things? All is myth. There is a Teutonic myth, and a Gaelic myth, and an Aryan myth—all myths, myths, myths.”

“Then you will not take the trouble to inquire?”

“No. I neither know nor care anything about the matter.”

“Well, Sir, you have conquered me, I confess. I certainly did think that the Smiths and Schmidts were one family ; but I might just as well believe that an elephant and a goose came of one forefather. There is evidently nothing in common between them.”

“What do you mean, Sir ? Do you mean to insult me ?”

“No, Sir. I only wished to avoid insulting the memory of the great and good Burgomaster.”

“Your joke is lost on me, Sir.”

“It is ; and I wish you good morning. I only hope you will never use a vulgar proverb current in England, and say ‘I’m a Dutchman.’ Good-day.”

So the stranger departed. He came to put the ruined youth in the way of claiming a vast property which had been amassed by the Burgomaster, all whose heirs had died out in Holland, and which only wanted a claimant.

The young man saw him no more, and never knew what a mistake he had made ; but he lived to know what bankruptcy meant ; and to fall out of the society of his philosophical friends, until he swept a crossing in London ; over which hundreds passed who never

regarded him as a being of one blood with themselves, and as often as not, used his crossing without throwing him a halfpenny.

At last, he had to turn out from a bad lodging into a worse. Before he went in some one said to him, "The last lodger died of small-pox a few days ago."

He answered, "Oh."

"Don't you believe it?" said the other.

"No."

"Won't you inquire?"

"No ; you can't believe anything."

So he went to the lodging, took the small-pox and died, and whether he believes he is dead is unknown.

Throwing Mud.

A PECULIAR boy lived in a hamlet, one who was always orderly, steady, clean and neat ; and the other boys hated him, because they were so unlike him in all this. One day, as he was returning from school under the shelter of a hedge, for it was blowing and raining very hard, they waylaid him with sticks in a dirty lane, and began to splash up the mud in the cart-ruts, hoping to spoil his clothes and make him as filthy as they were : but the wind blew from him to them. The splashes fell short, and did him no harm ; but they were carried back by the gale on the persecutors ; and you would have laughed to see how the dirt was driven back on those who had thrown it. In a few minutes their faces as well as their clothes were covered with filth, and they learned to their cost that throwing mud at good people often does more mischief to

the sender than to him at whom it is cast. Some men, who watched the scene from behind the hedge, laughed heartily at the discomfited urchins, and it was a joke against them for a long time in the hamlet.

The Cry.

SOME years ago the animals rebelled, and deposed the lion from his throne. They met together in his absence, and passed a resolution to the effect that they would henceforth be a republic governed by officers annually elected. The resolution was officially communicated to the lion, who laughed, and said "he did not care for the name of the thing, but he should retain the power, and use it at his discretion." When the animals heard this, they looked rather foolish, but, being cheered up by a chimpanzee, they ordered a minute to be made of the lion's reply, and proceeded to elect a government for the year, consisting of the said chimpanzee, a bear, a fox, a snake, a parrot, an ass, and a flea. So the government was installed, and by the end of the year became very unpopular, for the members of it all looked after their own interests, and many were the complaints; as, for in-

stance, that the monkey was a thief, and purloined the revenues ; the bear was a bear, and snubbed every deputation ; the fox ate the fowls ; the snake was a sneak ; the parrot a chatterbox ; the flea very annoying ; the donkey an ass. When the year was nearly out, there was a cabinet council, and the following conversation took place between the members of the government :—

Monkey. “ We shall not be elected again.”

Bear. “ I don’t care if we’re not.”

Donkey. “ No more do I.”

Parrot. “ Then we shall be nobody.”

Snake. Silent.

Fox. “ I shall lose my livelihood.”

Flea. “ So shall I.”

Fox. “ There is no need for us to be turned out at all. Let us get up an electioneering cry, and go to the poll.”

Donkey. “ I can’t think of one.”

Fox. “ Anything will do if we stick to it. It does not matter a straw whether there is anything in it or not, if it only catches the public. The greater the humbug the better.”

Parrot. “ Tell us one. I will take care to work it, if I only get hold of it.”

Fox. “ Well, suppose we say to the birds, ‘ Every

bird shall have a tree to himself of just the same height.'"

Donkey. "Capital."

Fox. "Then for the horses. They shall only work half time, and have twice as much corn."

Monkey. "But will the masters agree?"

Fox. "We'll make them. Then for the bats. They shall not have the holes in the church stopped, but shall go in and out when they like. The dogs not to be tied up. A free breakfast for all, and a free dinner. Liberty. Down with tyrants. Hares strictly preserved."

Here the fox coughed a little to hide his suppressed laughter, at this benevolent provision for his own interests.

All this was agreed to, and the election came on. Grand speeches were made, and vociferous cheers given. There were cat-calls, goose hissings, parrot screamings, and the like; and the late government was re-elected by a large majority. After all was over, an owl, who had sat winking her eyes, and abstained from voting, addressed the assembly as follows :—

"Birds, beasts, and reptiles,—I congratulate you on your wisdom. I hope you will enjoy your poli-

tical system ; but remember that it is this : the tiger, wolf, fox, and their peers, are to have free breakfast and dinner. Very pleasant for the sheep and hares. But all tyrants are to be put down. How are these things to be reconciled ? ”

There was a great commotion, then wrangling, then fighting ; in the midst of which the lion quietly entered, and looked round, and then taking the donkey up in his mouth, walked quietly off and ate him for supper. No one dared speak ; but when he was out of sight the monkey said, “ He’s a brute ! ” a remark which the parrot repeated ; but neither of these observations saved the life of the donkey, and the assembly dispersed for the most part in serious silence ; and how the government will manage in the face of this blow to their prestige, or what will be the result of the next election, is at present uncertain.

Christiana.

CHRISTIANA was playing in a pleasure-garden with other damsels, and at last so weary of very pleasure that it became a pain, she leaned over the garden wall. As she did this, she observed a shepherd leading some beautifully white sheep. He stopped and looked at her, and said—

“When will you go to your father?”

“Alas!” she said, “I have no father. I am a stranger here, and an orphan, without a home, without a parent.”

“No,” he replied. “You have a father, although you do not know him, and he expects you anxiously.”

“I wish I could believe you,” she said.

“I wish you could,” was the reply. “To help you I will give you some letters of his to read. You will find that they speak of you ; and, if you can trust me,

I can assure you that I have seen him, and know him, and came from him, and can lead you to him."

Having said this, he departed.

Then Christiana took her letters to a lonely place to read them again and again, and pondered the words of the stranger, and longed to believe, but could not.

A few days afterwards, as she was watching for him over the wall, she saw him, and he accosted her thus:—

"You are weary of your pleasures. No wonder. They are worthless. They wither as you pluck them. You long to believe and cannot. Ah! how you read and thought in that lonely place, and wished to trust me, and could not."

Christiana started. He had read her thoughts, and she perceived it.

Then he went on and told her all that ever she did, until her knees shook under her, and she almost sank to the ground.

"Do you believe me?" he asked at last.

"I do," she replied.

"And will you go to your father?"

"I will."

"It is a narrow, steep, rough way," he said. "There are many hardships on it."

“ I will go,” she said.

“ Then come at once.”

“ Shall I not say farewell ?”

“ No, come at once.”

So she went ; and, as they walked, the way was very beautiful, through flowers and over crystal rivulets, through the first of which she walked and felt like another creature ; but soon they came to a very different region ; and the road grew narrow, and stony, and steep, and the labour of travelling over it was great ; and the sky clouded over ; and she lay down at night under a great rock in sorrow, and saw not her shepherd-guide at all.

Next day the road was as the day before ; but the shepherd was with her, and talked with her and encouraged her.

“ Where are your sheep ?” she asked.

“ I have left them for a time,” he replied, “ to take care of you.”

“ Oh, how gracious ! but it is vain ; I shall die. I can never bear this journey.”

The shepherd made her sit down, and brought her honey out of the stony rock, and water from a rill. So she was strengthened, and they went on.

By degrees the road grew worse and worse. The

sharp stones cut her sandals, and through them her feet.

The shepherd noticed her pain, and said, "I travelled over this road once barefoot, and carrying a heavy burden."

They travelled on and on, and came to a dark valley, into which they descended by a narrow path not two feet wide, and one wrong step was death; but the shepherd kept her from falling, and held out a crook to her at the dangerous places, and assisted her.

As they went, he told her much of her father, and of the land where he dwelt; and made her learn to sing the songs of that country; and these comforted her by the way.

The valley ended in a yawning cavern dark as night. She hesitated when she looked into it.

"I have been through it," said the shepherd. "I was three days and nights in it."

Still she feared. The thought came over her "He has deceived me after all. He fails me in my greatest need."

"I do not," he said; "I will not."

She felt that he had read her thoughts again, and took a step forwards, trembling violently.

As she did so she observed one come to her bearing vessels of gold in his hands.

There was a plate on which lay a golden light, and a cup full of ruby light ; and the golden light and the ruby light shone on the black rocky sides of the cavern, and made it beautiful as the sunrise.

She looked at the bearer. It was the Shepherd. She looked at the plate. She saw His Face. She perceived the same Face reflected in the ruby cup. It was one marvel. The Shepherd, and the Bearer, and the plate, and the cup, seemed all one. She knew not where she was. All seemed one glory, one light, one bliss. Then she ate and drank ; and the shepherd seemed to lead her, yet to be by her side. She was lost in a happy wonder. She began to sing, as she had been taught ; and, singing, entered the dark passage, and her voice died away by degrees, and was heard no more on this side of the rocky gates ; and so she passed to her father.

Fascination.

A CHILD had strayed from its home into the forest. As it gathered the flowers, it became lost to all thought except that of enjoyment, and roamed farther and farther. Suddenly it stopped and gazed at an object which riveted its attention. A creature lay wreathed in beautiful curls in the path, with its head stretched out and its mouth open, and its glittering eyes gleaming into the very heart of the child. The poor little boy knew what it was, and trembled with fear, but he had no power to move. The fixed gaze of the serpent dazzled him, and entirely mastered him. At last the creature opened its mouth; but this terrible movement, so far from inducing the child to fly far from his enemy, had, most strangely, the effect of forcing him to creep nearer and nearer to his own ruin. The serpent had fascinated him. He could not look to the right hand nor to the

left. With an indescribable attraction, the hateful beast drew its victim voluntarily and involuntarily nearer and nearer to the jaws of destruction. Suddenly the note of a dove sounded in the clear heat and stillness of noon through the forest. There was a sweet plaintive power in the voice, which the child could not resist. He looked back towards the dove, and the spell was broken. He could hear the rustling coils of the retreating serpent, but he scarcely regarded it ; for there on the level arm of a pine tree, as on one arm of a cross, sat the dove, and with its mild eyes and winning voice, melted the child's heart with a grief and a joy which no words could express. As he gazed, the verdure seemed to vanish away from the tree. Only a bare pole with cross branches stood before him, and one seemed to be hanging thereon, and the very sight made the child weep more ; such a power of love and of sorrow flowed forth from the sight. He was fascinated. He could not move, although he could weep ; and then a darkness fell on the scene. But all this time the note of the dove was still heard, still pleading, still calling, still soothing ; and presently the darkness passed away like a cloud, and when it was gone the cross was gone also ; and over head, through the trees of the forest, was an azure of blue, clear, deep, transparent. The deep blue of the Bay of Naples

cannot be compared to it. The blue of the sky on a clear wintry night cannot be mentioned at the same time with it ; and through it and beyond it, yet in it, was a sheen of light, and there appeared beings of light, and a Light of Light, beyond all other light ; and, in the midst, a cross of clear light ; and all the time the dove was heard in the forest, but the child moved not, spoke not, until the boughs of the trees seemed to meet again over its head, and to shut out the vision. Then it cried out,—

“Alas! alas! joy! joy!” and slowly found its way home ; and after this the child was a strange child, not like other children ; very good, very loveable, but very strange ; and people said it was fascinated. If it was so, the fascination was not that of the serpent. The child had many troubles, which some people count troubles, and yet seemed scarcely to feel them. It had special troubles, too deep for words, but others did not know what these troubles were. However, in all troubles and all work it was always the same ; and some people wondered and loved, others wondered and hated, but the child was unaltered.

After some years, this child, child no longer, fell ill, and so lying on its sick-bed, spoke of wonderful things, and lay quiet, as if listening to the voice of a dove, and so passed away.

The Morning Star.

I SAW a morning star fall from heaven. Red and wrathful, like a torch in the mist, it plunged downwards, and fell into the darkness of an unformed world beneath.*

I looked again. The world was now formed and inhabited, but dark, and through it moved this fallen star, like the will-o'-the-wisp, misleading the unwary to their ruin. Some, however, were not so misled. There was a glow in the East which sufficed for the watchful; and there was a wide-spread belief that a new and true morning star would soon arise.†

I beheld again. I saw certain men watching the heavens, and suddenly beholding a new star. They rose up with joy, and followed it. Over rivers, plains, and mountains they went until they came to a city, where the star shone no longer. They then left the

* Isa. xiv. 12, with S. Luke x. 18.

† Numb. xxiv. 17.

city, and it led them forwards, and stood above a cottage, which they entered at once. The star above the cottage then shone no more ; but a star glittered within it ; one which shone brighter and brighter for a few years, and then passed from sight. I was amazed when I saw those who had worshipped this star still joyful in countenance when deprived of the light ; and I asked them how it was that they could be so cheerful after their loss, whereto they replied that the star which had shone outside them shone now within, and burnt brightly in their hearts by day and by night.*

Then I saw these men stand before One, in whose right hand were seven stars, and whose countenance was as the sun shining in his strength ; who said, "I am the bright and morning star," and He gave these men the morning star, that is, He gave Himself to them, and they became all of them stars, all like Him, and they shone bright and clear in the skies, and sang together, and shouted for joy with the elder morning stars, who had sung at the first creation. And all sang together in a perfect and perpetual harmony at the completion of the second creation.†

* 2 Pet. i. 19.

† Rev. i. 16 ; xxii. 16 ; ii. 28.

Raiment.

TWO men met at the close of the day at an inn. Both had travelled far and were weary, but they were in a very different condition.

Christopher had evidently gone through hard times. His clothing, once of the best, was patched and rent, and scarcely held together. He was shown into his room, and there prepared for sleep. When he took off his clothing, poor as it was, he looked at it with affection. It was that which he had received from his parents, and which was a memorial to him of many a battle, toil, and pain. He stripped himself slowly and thoughtfully, lay down, crossed his hands on his breast, and fell asleep.

Yet we can hardly call it sleep, for in the night his mind reviewed the past, and looked onwards to the future. Bright visions came to him. He heard won-

drous voices, and replied to the strange speakers ; and so the night wore away.

Cosmopher had not endured such hard shifts as his temporary neighbour. His raiment was handsome still ; heavy with gold and jewels, and free from rents. As he took it off it was clear that he loved it dearly. He clung to it for its value. It had been his glory and happiness. He prized it above everything else. He did not like to part with it, even for a time ; and he was suspicious and afraid, lest if he once quitted it, he might awake and find it gone. He, too, fell asleep in a manner. But his sleep was restless. He tossed to and fro ; cried out with fear, and seemed as a man suffering from raging fever. Thus the night waned with him.

Not gradually, but suddenly, the morning burst upon them both. They sprang from their beds, and found themselves in a blaze of light, dazzling beyond the power of sight.

Christopher looked for his dress. It was there. He knew it again, and yet scarcely knew it. It was unchanged, yet changed ; the same, but glorified. He arrayed himself in the white and shining vestment, and passed forth quickly from his chamber, in the direction of a voice which called on him by name.

But the raiment of Cosmopher had changed for the worse. The same it was, also, and not the same. Foul, loathsome, hideous it showed. Yet there was none other. He must perforce wear it. So clad in his shameful clothing he also passed from his chamber, and slowly and sadly went whither he was called ; for the voice was such as could not be disobeyed.

Then the chambers, and the town, and the city, where these things were, disappeared in a mighty shock ; and a new city was seen in the sky in a new earth ; and it was well for Christopher that he was changed and transformed so as to be fit for a place where all was so glorious.

Jewels.

A BOY stood watching his uncle the jeweller in silent wonder. He had only just come from the country, and was amazed to hear the value of the dull and rough stones which he saw ; and still more astonished when he saw his uncle cutting them and grinding them away as if they were worthless. By degrees, however, he was reconciled to the sight when he saw the bright flash of the diamond, the red glow of the ruby, the radiant green of the emerald come out under the hand of the jeweller, and those rugged stones become jewels of marvellous beauty.

At last when the jeweller had completed a casket of precious stones for the king, he swept all his tools away into a corner. They were not wanted any longer ; their work was done. They were of no value in themselves, but only so far as they had perfected the

See Abp. Leighton on 1 Peter iv. 17.

jewels. There they were left, therefore, in dirt and neglect whilst the jeweller proceeded to court, where the king recognized his treasures, and had them set in his crown, where they still are, and always shall be, never to feel that cutting and grinding again.

The Three Sons.

A VERY small farmer of the old sort, who lived in the Isle of Wight, had three sons, and began to think how he should ever manage to put them out into the world. This was rather over-careful, for they were but children as yet. What would he have done, had he known that he was going to have eleven more children? However, he did not know, nor did his wife, who might have had her say as well, had she known. But children come imperceptibly, and accumulate, like one's bills, unperceived.

Well, the farmer and his wife were walking on the side of the chalk down, just over their house, and the husband began kicking to pieces the fairy rings of fungi which grew around on the soft grass.

"Drat they toadstools," he said; "there ain't so much grass here for the harses as there have a-been."

"Doan't, John," said his wife; "the fairies put 'em there, and may-be they have a use for 'em."

"A very vunny un. I counts you're zot," he replied; "they may bide, then, when I come athurt 'em. The grass do seem vorader here."

So he left the bright yellow rings alone to please his wife, for he was a kind-hearted man and a right good husband.

Next day, whilst the good woman was feeding the hens, she saw a beautiful little queen standing on the cider-press, about three inches high. They were not used to queens in the island at that time, and the woman curtseyed respectfully.

"I heard all you said yesterday," said the queen of the fairies. "You leave us our pleasures, and you shall have yours. Now you have three sons. They shall all be great men in their way. Do not spare your money on their education, and, when the time comes, I will give them a recipe which will make them successful one after another."

Having said this, the fairy queen disappeared. When the farmer's wife told her husband all this, he laughed at her; but after a few years he began to believe it, for his land grew three times as much corn as his neighbours', and he had three lambs to the one

of other people, and butter and eggs till Newport market was almost glutted. Then he began to believe in the fairies, sent his sons to good schools, and got them into College at Winchester, where they became prefects, and got off to New College.

When the eldest had taken his degree, and, having duly studied medicine, had become a physician, the fairy appeared to him and said, "I dare say your mother has told you what I promised to her, and I have kept my word so far. Now I am not going to make a great man of you at once, which would only make you a bad man, but to give advice which is better than gold. When things go wrong do not grumble, but find out the reason." So saying, she left 500*l.* on the table, and vanished in air.

With this money the young man set up, and began to put his learning in practice. He soon got a few patients, and thought he was rising rapidly, and became rather careless. One day he felt a dreadful pain in the head, and, soon after, his pulse rose to three hundred, and he was in a raging fever which did not last long, but was succeeded by icy coldness and fainting, and this was followed by a terrible stomach-ache. Presently all these maladies moderated, and he started with pale face and trembling hands on his

professional rounds. He found that his four first patients had all been suffering in the same manner as he had. He called for the prescription which he had given to them, and found that he had thoughtlessly ordered the very medicines which had produced these effects. Then he remembered the fairy, and he saw at once that he was to be himself a sort of barometer to his patients, and thenceforth he acted accordingly, and considered them through himself, and became greatly esteemed and beloved, and eventually rose to the head of his profession. His practice was worth 7000*l.* a year, and he died a baronet.

The second brother became a priest. He was very good and very eloquent, and people came in crowds to hear him preach and to consult him in private. But he found himself so depressed and hopeless that he almost committed suicide. In this state of mind the fairy appeared to him and said, "Judge of your flock by yourself." He did so, and found that he had laid such a hard rule upon them that they could not keep it, and were in great misery. Upon this he was very penitent and changed his plan of treatment entirely. It was not long before he found himself very excitable, careless of his duty, and no longer what he had been. Moreover, he heard strange

reports of his flock. So he began to reason again, and to judge of others by himself, and a second time he altered his system. Upon this he had the happiness of seeing that those whom he taught grew wiser and better, that they were cheerful without levity, sober without moroseness. His fame increased with his wisdom and goodness; and he died a bishop.

The third wished to be a schoolmaster, and was so; and as soon as he began his career the fairy sent him a cane. He tried it, and a single touch of this pleasant reminder cured a boy of his faults. One day, however, he lost his temper, and thrashed a dull boy very severely. When the punishment was over, he returned, cane in hand, to his rooms, where—to his amazement rather than to his pleasure—the cane gave him such a thrashing as he had never had in his life. He considered, and rightly judged that he had exceeded his duty, and he became more gentle thenceforth. Still he had a lesson to learn which he little expected. One day he was caning a boy, and every time he struck the pupil the cane sprang up and gave him a blow in his face: as many cuts as the boy had, so many the master, until he was not fit to be seen. It was a long time before he made out the meaning of this; but he found it at last—namely, that the

blame was equally distributed between teacher and taught. He had neglected the boy as idle and dull and backward, and then punished him, forgetting that he had not done his part by the pupil; hence the fairy divided the pain between master and scholar.

When he found out this, the master became more conscientious in the discharge of his duties, more successful accordingly, and much beloved, and he lived to become head master of Winchester, and to train up two archbishops, four bishops, two lord chancellors, and many great men, and was celebrated for his firm, equitable, and kindly administration, which communicated its spirit to his pupils, so that the said archbishops, bishops, and chancellors were superior to ordinary archbishops, bishops, and chancellors in the gentle and wise use of their powers.

As to the rest of the farmer's children, they never rose in society; for the farmer, when he got rich, ploughed up the down, which not only produced less when ploughed than when grazed, but by so doing he drove the fairies away.

The Dark Forest.

A COMPANY of travellers had to pass through a dense tropical forest before they reached home. This forest was a tangled mass of creepers whose sharp thorns tore the flesh beneath the clothing, and made all progress both slow and painful. It was also full of wild beasts, and poisonous serpents ; but over and above all this, it was for the most part very dark. A thick knotted foliage spread above, high out of reach ; and all the light to be had came through this. As for the distant hills, they could not be seen through the prison walls of endless tree trunks, boughs, and creepers.

It will easily be seen that the light received from above varied according to the part of the forest, and the position of the travellers. Hence, some of the travellers had much light at times, some little, and

some almost none. So it came to pass that a certain portion followed the light, enjoying the blue sky and bright rays peering through the branches, without much regard to the safety or straightness of the course. Others were depressed at the gloom, and lagged behind. This took place on Saturday. Next day the leader sounded a horn, and nearly all assembled at the signal.

When they had come together, the leader addressed them, saying :—

“My friends, I fear lest the light and darkness should mislead you. The fact is, they neither of them have anything to do with the journey. The straight, onward way is the thing. The compass shows that ; and I will tell you how we stand by the compass. If you lose sight of me, you have each of you a compass of your own, which I have had rectified ; but keep well together, and neither be misled by sunshine nor shadows. When we are once outside the forest, we shall have the full light.”

Some believed what he said, and some did not. When they renewed the journey on Monday, there were those who, rejoicing in the light, wandered far, and of these many were not seen again. Those, however, who reappeared came torn and bleeding and

faint, and had to pass through much darkness and lose their beloved light. Some lost all heart in the gloom, and so doing lost themselves. Others persevered in patience, journeying by their compass both in darkness and light.

At last the forest was passed, when a flood of light burst on the pilgrims. There were the blessed hills they had longed for, and there was their home. They were safe ; and the sun shone perpetually.

Hard Ground.

THE furnace heat of summer baked the field,
Till leaped the autumnal ploughshare from the
ground,
Impatiently ; and when the skies did yield
Their hoarded riches, and did o'er-abound,
Like misers' sons who squander gold concealed ;
Then turbid waters from earth's sunburnt face
Streamed wildly down, and seawards rushed apace.

Winter considering, from his wrinkled brow
Looked coldly down, and reefing every cloud,
Bade his north wind with withering fury blow,
And then relenting spread a virgin shroud
Upon the corpse-like earth of sheltering snow,
Which pitiful airs dissolved mid sighs and tears ;
And contrite now earth's rugged breast appears.

Thus on the soul instruction falls in vain,
And floods of wholesome doctrine dull the ear,
Until the stubborn will is rent by pain,
And love treads noiseless in the steps of fear.
Then doth man's heart drink in the gracious rain,
Silently softening : then the contrite breast
Hails the good seed, and is with verdure blest.

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